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Constructions Of Anarchism In British Fiction, 1885-1914

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CONSTRUCTIONS OF ANARCHISM IN BRITISH FICTION, 1885-1914

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines constructions of anarchism in selected fiction published in Britain between 1885 and 1914. It does so in the larger context of ideological constructions of anarchism within late-Victorian and Edwardian media, popular and literary culture. It also makes use, particularly in its first two chapters, of the work of M.M. Bakhtin, through whom it understands the novel as dialogizing these cultural ideologies.

Chapter One documents the emergence of what I call an anarchist typology, or collection of stereotypes of anarchists and anarchism that indicates a late nineteenth-century anxiety about the possibility of revolution. It traces the meaning of the overdetermined terms 'anarchy' and 'anarchism' since the sixteenth century and then looks at constructions of these terms in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, providing a brief survey of relevant anarchist theory and practice.

Chapter Two offers a Bakhtinian reading of Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima*, showing how the novel constructs anarchism primarily as a threat to art. It demonstrates that James's monoglossic prose style represses the heteroglossia represented for him by naturalism and newspaper discourse, which are regarded as forms of aesthetic anarchy. It then shows how the novel's anxiety about anarchism centres upon its construction of the movement as a form of class-mixing.

Chapter Three examines the strategies by which Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* contains the incomprehensible nihilism that anarchism represents in the Author's Note to the novel. These strategies permit the construction of anarchism as a form of fraudulent self-deception symptomatic of a widespread social degeneracy in British society. The chapter examines in detail the novel's ambivalent engagement with Nietzsche, showing how through a dialogue with Nietzschean intertexts anarchism is constructed as a form of religious fanaticism that is connected with the dangers of both foreign imperialism and the lower classes.

Chapter Four examines G.K. Chesterton's novel *The Man Who Was Thursday* as a blatant articulation of populist and imperialist ideology that constructs anarchism as a threat to the British way of life exemplified by the figure of the "common man." This construction is further determined by anarchism's articulation within the context of Catholic ideology as a form of spiritual fakery associated with the demonic.

for Mum and Dad,

Fionnuala and Simon

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INTRODUCTION

On 12 February 1894 a home-made bomb planted by a French anarchist named Emile Henry exploded in the cafe of the Hotel Terminus at the Gare St-Lazare in Paris. One person was killed and twenty wounded (Joll 117-18). News of the event spread quickly to England, where the following description appeared two days later, 14 February, in *The Times*, under the headline "The Bomb Outrage in Paris":

> One of the most curious things to notice as to last night's outrage is the calmness, not to say the indifference, with which this revolting crime is apparently received by the public. It would seem that, in view of the impossibility of stopping outrages inspired by perverse and morbid minds, the Parisians ... are resigned to living with these enemies, springing up at unexpected times and places, who cannot be prevented, but can only be punished. There is evidently no telling when we shall see the last of these assassins who cloak their thirst for blood with a pretended doctrine, and are encouraged by men ready to imitate them.

This extract from a longer article is typical of the press reaction in Britain to the visible signs of anarchism in European urban centres at the end of the nineteenth

century. In terms ranging from uneasiness to outrage the newspapers articulated the anxiety of a public order upon which anarchism had, apparently, declared unconditional war. The shocked character of this response is understandable, for 'propaganda by the deed,' violence directed at symbols of the existing social order to rally support for the anarchist cause, occurred to an extent and with an apparent ferocity that must have appeared unprecedented. According to George Woodcock (*Anarchism* 255-60) there were thirteen acts of anarchist terrorism between March 1892 and June 1894 in Paris alone. These consisted of eleven bombings -- including an earlier bombing by Henry that killed five policemen, and an attack by August Vaillant on the Chamber of Deputies on 9 December 1893 -- and two stabbings: the wounding of the Serbian Minister by a cobbler named Léauthier on 13 November 1893, and the assassination of French President Sadi Carnot on 24 June 1894 by an Italian anarchist, Santo Caserio, in revenge for the execution of Vaillant. Other famous 'outrages' preceded this period of intense terrorism in France. On 11 and 27 March 1881 the notorious murderer and tomb robber François-Claudius Ravachol tried unsuccessfully to blow up the houses of two judges in the name of anarchism (256); five years later Charles Gallo threw a bottle of vitriol from a gallery of the Paris Stock exchange and fired revolver shots into the air (Joll 112).

Elsewhere in Europe anarchists launched similarly spectacular attacks against the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. In Barcelona the anarchist Pallas was executed for a failed assassination attempt on Martínez Campos, the Captain-General of the city. In revenge, Santiago Salvador bombed the Liceo Theatre, killing 20 patrons and wounding at least 23 more (Woodcock *Anarchism* 309). Assassination attracted the most attention. Between 1878 and 1906 eleven attempts on the lives of heads of state occurred, many of which were successful. The death of Tsar Alexander II at the hands of the Russian Nihilist Elnikov in 1881, an event applauded by anarchists throughout Europe, was followed by Carnot's assassination and that of Spanish Prime Minister Antonio Canovas in 1897, Empress Elisabeth of Austria in 1898, King Humbert of Italy in 1900, and American President William McKinley in 1901. Failed attempts occurred in the cases of Kaiser Wilhelm I (twice in 1878), the Shah of Persia and Prince of Wales (in Paris in August and November 1900) and King Alfonso of Spain in Madrid (1906) (Romein 147-52).

The spate of anarchist terrorism in Europe in the 1880s and 90s was the primary means by which the British public gained knowledge of anarchism. As I indicate in my first chapter, this limited awareness was partly due to the resistance of the British socialist and labour movements to anarchist beliefs and the consequent restriction of those beliefs largely to intellectual and artistic circles. In

the absence of wider access to anarchist ideas and practice, therefore, the outrages reported in the headlines conditioned the majority of British response. In this way the popular reputation of anarchism in Britain was damaged at the start by a stigma of violence that was regularly associated with insane bloodthirstiness. In popular fiction, such as E. Douglas Fawcett's *Hartmann the Anarchist*, anarchism was thematized as an eruption of animality, "a tigress who, having once tasted blood, yearned to slake her thirst in the heart of civilization itself" (136); in the words of *The Times*, it was an "attack of wild beasts, whom modern science has equipped with murderous weapons" (15 February 1894). In *Demanding the Impossible*, his recent history of anarchism, Peter Marshall summarizes the general attitude toward anarchism in the period:

> Anarchy is terror, the creed of bomb-throwing desperadoes wishing to pull down civilization. Anarchy is chaos, when law and order collapse and the destructive passions of man run riot. Anarchy is nihilism, the abandonment of all moral values and the twilight of reason ... In the popular imagination, in our everyday language, anarchy is associated with destruction and disobedience. (ix)

Despite the daunting record of anarchist outrages I have indicated, however, many contemporary historians note that anarchism was in fact a relatively non-violent

movement. Marshall, for example. comments that compared with the movement as a whole "only a tiny minority of anarchists practised terror as a revolutionary strategy" (ix). Moreover, non-violent anarchism cannot be attributed to fear of government reprisal, for, as George Crowder observes, while some anarchists practiced terrorism, "Others, arguably more faithful to the fundamental principles of anarchism, repudiated violence in favour of progress through education and personal moral renewal" (1). While many of those not directly responsible for propaganda by the deed applauded its occurrences, or, like Peter Kropotkin, attempted to justify it as an act of desperation, others, such as Octave Mirbeau in an article in *Le Journal* (19 February 1894), regarded violence as detrimental to the anarchist cause, and criticized Henry's motives:

> A mortal enemy of anarchism could not have done better than Emile Henry when he hurled his inexplicable bomb in the midst of peaceful anonymous people who had come into a cafe to drink a beer before going to bed ... Henry says, affirms, claims that he is an anarchist ... [But t]oday it is a fashion for criminals to claim a connection with [anarchism] when they have perpetrated a good crime. (quoted in Joll 127)

Anarchism was in fact a complex phenomenon, undeserving of the stereotypes to which it has been reduced by its opponents and from which historians, as Richard D. Sonn

observes, (xii) must rescue it. In Britain, where anarchist violence was notably absent, reactions to anarchism occurred largely at the level of various types of social and cultural discourse These reactions tended to be polarized. On the one hand there were panicky and hyperbolically reductive accounts of anarchism, found generally in the press and popular fiction, that represented the need to contain, at the level of discourse, the threatening possibility of the eruption of European anarchism at home. On the other hand were more sophisticated literary representations of anarchism, most of which were far from fully sympathetic, but which are notable for their attempts to engage with the anarchist phenomenon in more complex fictional ways. Both these forms of discursive engagement with anarchism constitute the subject of this thesis.

Most historians of anarchism acknowledge its presence in the three novels which form the central chapters of my study, James's *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) and Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908). Nevertheless, relatively little literary criticism exploiting this connection exists. Two critics in particular, whose work my thesis acknowledges and partially expands upon, deserve mention here. Graham Holderness, in his article "Anarchism and Fiction," published in 1987, provides a short critical survey of fiction about anarchism that includes James and Conrad, other examples of British

novels and Zola's *Germinal* (a text addressed in my chapter on James). Barbara Arnett Melchiori's book *Terrorism in The Late Victorian Novel*, published in 1985, is an exhaustive survey of "dynamite novels" (viii), which she identifies as a subgenre of late nineteenth-century fiction. Melchiori addresses both James and Conrad, though not centrally, and considers anarchism as one among many forms of fictional terrorism, which include Nihilism, Fenianism and Mormonism. Neither critic deals with Chesterton. The survey nature of Holderness's article and Melchiori's book, the latter of which in particular provides invaluable assistance to research in this area, dictates a general, 'horizontal' treatment of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century media, popular fiction and literary constructions of anarchism. In what follows I embark instead on more detailed analyses of three novels in the context of these discourses.

This focus on individual texts requires an acknowledgement of the parameters within which my study operates. The first of these is the obvious limitation, implied in my title, to representations of anarchism as opposed to other forms of perceived terrorist threat. As I note in Chapter One, the boundaries of this demarcation are at times shifting, especially in popular representations, because of the frequent confusion of anarchism with other forms of revolutionary violence. In general, however,

anarchism can be considered as a discrete theme among those other forms with its own fictional specificity.

My study is further concerned with, first, non-anarchist representations of anarchism and, secondly, literary discourses that fall into the same category. The first of these limitations is dictated by several considerations. One of the principal themes of this study is the ways in which the threat of anarchism is reduced and contained by various cultural discourses. Moreover, the size-constraints of the study prevent an extensive investigation into anarchism as a political philosophy or historical movement. Even if this were not the case, to begin such an investigation would be to introduce redundancy to a topic to which others -- in particular George Woodcock, James Joll and Peter Marshall -- have already devoted admirable attention[1]. I will be looking at anarchist self-representations, therefore, only to the extent that they bear on the non-anarchist construction of the movement, for example in the emergence of anarchist stereotypes in popular discourse, as well as to show the 'constructedness' of cultural discourse about anarchism by indicating possibilities of other types of representation. The second limitation is dictated simply by my primary interest, which is in literature, on which the last three chapters of the thesis focus. Within this parameter I have chosen to examine texts that offer a range of responses to anarchism.

The literary chapters of my thesis focus on three novels about British anarchism written and published in England between 1885 and 1910. These texts -- two of which are canonical, one of which is not -- represent two 'high' cultural reactions to anarchism, one at the beginning and one at the end of the period of the outrages, and one popular response.

My approach, which borrows from relatively recent developments in historiography, is roughly new historicist in its concern with the relation between literary texts and their cultural contexts. It is inspired by the work of intellectual historians such as Michel Foucault and Dominick LaCapra. It also employs some methodological assumptions of Marxist critics, though it does not subscribe to their politics, specifically the move to ground readings of texts in the "untranscendable horizon" of a Marxist historical master-narrative -- understood as 'genuine History,' or the 'Real' by critics such as Georg Lukàcs, Louis Althusser and Terry Eagleton -- that Fredric Jameson advocates in *The Political Unconscious* (10). In this respect, too, I must acknowledge my dissent from the belief, expressed in certain places by Foucault, that the individual's identity, what Foucault calls the soul, is produced exclusively by social power, and that this power is, in turn, coterminous with knowledge (*Discipline* 67-8). This disagreement is based on my own psychological rejection of the intolerable situation

such a belief implies, and my hope that this study, on which I have worked for the last three years, constitutes a kind of knowledge that is not produced by the machinations of a power in which I have no say. This is not, of course, to claim that my thesis is apolitical in its intent or bias: doubtless its politics -- which, I should emphasize here, are not completely sympathetic with anarchism -- will be visible to its readers in ways that they are invisible to me. Rather, it is simply to note that it resists totalizing models of political and social relations, with which I am personally uncomfortable. My approach, in this respect, has been guided by LaCapra's comment in the introduction to his book *History, Politics And The Novel* that

> At the risk of remaining at an overly particularized level of analysis, I try to avoid the tendency to sacrifice the subtlety and insistence of specific readings to reductive larger perspectives that prefigure the material and assure the analyst that he will arrive where he wanted to go before he undertook his investigation. (2)

At the beginning of his classic study *Politics And The Novel*, published in 1957, Irving Howe invokes Stendhal's statement that "Politics in a work ... is like a pistol-shot in the middle of a concert, something loud and vulgar, and yet a thing to which it is not possible to refuse one's attention" (Howe 15). For Howe, the eruption of politics

into novelistic discourse occurs at a determinate point in European literary history when the attention of the novelist shifts from "the gradations within society to the fate of society itself" (19). At this point the social novel is replaced by the political novel which no longer takes society for granted but in which "the *idea* of society, as distinct from the mere unquestioned workings of society, has penetrated the consciousness of [its] characters in all its profoundly problematic aspects" (19). Howe's distinction between society novel and political novel here implies an opposition between novelistic discourse and politics which, intruding from the outside, take over the novel somewhere in the middle of the nineteenth century. This opposition is retained within the political novel itself which is confronted with the problem of incorporating politics in the form of ideology into itself:

> The political novel ... is peculiarly a work of internal tension. To be a novel at all, it must contain the usual representation of human behaviour and feeling; yet it must also absorb into its stream of movement the hard and perhaps insoluble pellets of modern ideology. (20)

More recent critics have recognized that, in the words of Foucault, "the least glimmer of truth is conditioned by politics" (*Sexuality* 5), and that novelistic discourse is inseparable from the political. Stendhal's metaphor, so

appropriate for a study of anarchism, and used by Howe to indicate the point at which the political is explicitly thematized in novelistic discourse in a certain way, thus misses the fact that the music and its comfortable audience is as historically and politically contingent as the fanatic in the balcony. My study shares this recognition that the embeddedness of literary texts in their culture, their very cultural existence and not simply the characters and incidents they describe, is inescapably bound up in politics. This awareness of the contingency of literary texts on their cultural and political contexts raises a question about the nature of the relationship between these two elements that needs to be addressed before I begin.

In the introduction to his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, one of the inaugural texts of the new historicism, Stephen Greenblatt describes the goal of criticism as the construction of a "poetics of culture," in which literature is seen as mediating between the practice of the author and the ideological structures which determine that practice (5). Literature performs this mediating function

> in three interlocking ways: as a manifestation of the concrete behaviour of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behaviour is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes. (4)

Greenblatt's approach suggests a dialectical relationship between the antitheses of author and culture, or behaviour and codes, in which literature represents at once a synthesis of the two and a reflection on its own synthesizing potential. In general I adopt this approach, though I am cautious about Greenblatt's situating the author over against his or her culture in what resembles suspiciously a binary opposition. The arguments in my thesis presuppose that, unlike for example T.S. Eliot's impersonal poet who reflects disassociatively upon society while remaining unaffected by the process, authors do not transcend their culture. Instead, I work on the assumption that the practice of an author is deeply conditioned by his or her culture, as well as, in the case of emigre writers like James and Conrad, the cultures in which they write. In this respect, their texts are always saturated by various cultural ideologies in ways of which they display greater or lesser degrees of awareness. My approach in this study is governed by the attempt to excavate these ideological discourses from within the texts in which they operate.

My use of the term 'ideology' derives from Louis Althusser's formulation in his now famous essay "Ideology And Ideological State Apparatuses," published in 1969: "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (162). Ideology, therefore, constitutes a representation of the

material world, though not, as I indicated earlier, one limited to the teleological narrative of history seen by Marxism to be immanent in that world. Culture, in this respect, is a collection of ideologies and the relationship of literature to its cultural contexts is therefore ideological. As Terry Eagleton points out, however, it would be wrong to see literary texts as simply reflecting or expressing ideology from outside of it as Althusser seems to imply when he describes art as a "*retreat*, an *internal distantiation* from the very ideology from which [it] emerges" ("Letter" 222-23). Rather, the text is "a certain *production* of ideology" (Eagleton *Criticism* 64) that is itself a form of ideological work.

Eagleton likens the relationship of text to culture to that between dramatic production and dramatic text. Dramatic production is linked to the play text not as the realization of an ideal essence, since both text and production are themselves material, 'worked' things, but as a version of the text in a different medium, that of performance rather than written language. While it "cannot absolutely transcend the text" the dramatic production "can at least round on it ... and interrogate it with a critical rigour which, since it exists only in the *relation* of production to text, can be shown but not stated" (68). Accordingly, the relationship of text to ideology is one in which the text does not always simply reproduce cultural

Borrowing terminology from Althusser's social analysis, by which he describes the "unity of ... different regional ideologies" within society as "being assured by their subjection to the ruling ideology" ("Ideology" 166), I imagine the novel as itself a kind of polity, in which an overarching textual ideology constitutes the formal ordering of the different and unruly ideologies that the text dialogizes.

In Chapter One of my thesis I describe the context of cultural constructions of anarchism in which the novels I address in the later chapters appear. The attempt to contain anarchism that dominates this context occurs through the establishment, either direct or implied, of a norm of political order in opposition to the anti-ideal of social and moral chaos anarchism purportedly represented. This establishment of a norm can be viewed as a form of self-fashioning, Greenblatt's description of which, though it refers to Renaissance texts, is appropriate here:

> Self-fashioning is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile ... [which] is perceived by authority either as that which is ... chaotic (the absence of order) or that which is negative (the demonic parody of order). (9)

In much of the writing of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods anarchism appears as a nationally alien incursion, posing a threat of nihilistic destruction that is associated

discourse as a form of heteroglossia is crucially social in its import. In his long essay "Discourse in The Novel," published in 1934-35, Bakhtin describes this aspect of the novel as

> the unfolding of social heteroglossia *surrounding* [its] object ... [which] is a focal point for heteroglot voices among which [the author's] own voice must also sound; these voices create the background necessary for his own voice, outside of which his artistic prose nuances cannot be perceived, and without which they 'do not sound.' (278)

The object of discourses -- here anarchism -- is therefore not neutral but is caught up in a web of ideologies that interact with each other and in which the novel participates. In my thesis the ideological work of the novel is seen to be produced out of a dialogue with pre-existing instances of cultural ideology. Importantly, other works of a particular novelist may partially constitute such instances, because the point at which a text may be at odds with its own ideology can also be the point at which it disagrees with other, more monologic instances of its author's production which exemplify that ideology. This is particularly evident in James and Conrad whose texts display to the critical eye a marked ambivalence about the possibility of political revolution that differs from their rejection of it elsewhere. As such, the corpus of a writer

is not, as Foucault puts it in *The Archaeolcgy of Knowledge*, a "homogeneous function" (23) but may be "at least partially dismembered," involving "differing forms of repetition or displacement that place in question simple models of intelligibility" (LaCapra "Rethinking" 268).

The possibility of this kind of internal disagreement among the novel's ideologies presupposes a further dimension of dialogism, the sense in which the novel *is* the dialogue of these ideologies. Bakhtin thus defines the novel as "a diversity of social speech types" (262), the formal organization of which is political: "The internal politics of style (how the elements are put together) is determined by its external politics (its relationship to alien discourse)" (284). I see these different types of social speech, therefore, as having their own ideological valencies that require a qualification of Bakhtin's claim that "upon entering the novel" social speech types "combine to form a structured artistic system" in which they are "subordinated to the higher stylistic unity of the work as a whole" (262). It is precisely this conception of stylistic unity that the ideological approach I take puts into question, claiming instead that such an apparent unity masks ideological conflict. The novel is not an aesthetic unity, the concept of which is itself ideological, but a site where both vying and mutually supporting cultural ideologies are contained to varying degrees of success by a dominant textual ideology.

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In much of the writing of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods anarchism appears as a nationally alien incursion, posing a threat of nihilistic destruction that is associated

metaphorically with the demonic. The survey of cultural discourse I provide in this chapter is intended not to be exhaustive, but to allow for the isolation of what I call an 'anarchist typology,' in which heterogeneous ideological representations converge in a collection of stereotypical constructions of anarchism[2]. In this respect, media, popular fiction and academic discourses construct anarchism according to a principle of what Marie-Christine Leps calls "intertextual authentication" (109), a trafficking in an economy of stereotypes that naturalizes their ideological substance as a form of cultural truth. As I show in a section on popular fiction at the end of the chapter, however, this ideological construction of anarchism is not entirely successful in its attempt to swamp dissenting voices.

In Chapter Two I examine how the aesthetic ideology of *The Princess Casamassima* determines its construction of anarchism. A considerable critical controversy has arisen among James scholars as to whether or not this novel constitutes a naturalist text. Here I argue that it does not, but that its own aesthetic, which anticipates James's characteristic later style, defines itself against the kind of naturalist representation of revolution exemplified by Zola's *Germinal*. As such the novel resists what it sees as a version of aesthetic anarchy that is tied implicitly to social revolution. The famous 'obscurity' of James's poetic

style is seen as an attempt to suppress naturalist heteroglossia and the eruption of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque, represented as the threat of class mixing and the vulgarization of the aristocracy, into the ideology of social hierarchy by which the novel's aesthetic is determined.

I begin Chapter Three by looking at how *The Secret Agent* constructs anarchism as a form of widespread degeneracy in British society. I contrast this depiction of anarchism as an instance of social weakness with its construction as an aggressively hostile conspiracy in the short stories "An Anarchist" and "The Informer." I then examine how the text's construction of anarchism is determined by its conflicted ideological engagement with Nietzsche. The chapter concludes by showing how *The Secret Agent*'s Nietzschean critique of anarchism as a form of asceticism is politicized in such a way as to identify the social degeneracy this asceticism represents with threats to the nation from foreign imperialism and the lower classes.

In Chapter Four I show how *The Man Who Was Thursday*'s depiction of anarchism as at once an innocuous bogey and a dire social threat indicates an anxiety about the movement prevalent in much of anarchist typology. This anxiety further manifests itself in the novel's construction of anarchism within the context of an ideology of religious populism as a form of demonic spiritual fakery.

Historically anarchism has been a losing force, in most cases lacking the resources and organization to support the threats represented by the flurry of outrages at the end of the nineteenth century. Only in Spain in the 1930s did it manage the consolidation necessary for it to achieve larger political significance and pose a serious threat to the state. In Britain, even in the apocalyptic atmosphere of the end of the century, anarchism was never more, in George Woodcock's words, than "a chorus of voices crying out in the wilderness" (*Anarchism* 370). Its existence, though sporadic and disorganized, has nevertheless been constant, then and now, and it is my hope that this study, though literary-historical in nature, has a topical interest that answers to a recent resurgence of interest and concern about anarchy and anarchism. I indicate in my conclusion some of the forms that this resurgence takes. For now I wish to note that this study of representations of anarchism follows La Capra's insistence that "even losing forces in history, be they revolts in the street or currents in texts, have as much right to close attention as do dominant forces and pressures" (*History* 3). It may accordingly offer ways of guarding against unthinking judgements of alternative models of political organization, and perhaps suggest ways of establishing constructive dialogue with such alternatives now, at a time when they may be more necessary than ever.

Endnotes

[1]Studies of anarchism abound. Other recent ones include Richard D. Sonn's history *Anarchism* (1992) and George Crowder's critical study *Classical Anarchism* (1991). For an account of the relationship of anarchism to French culture at the end of the nineteenth century, see Sonn's *Anarchism And Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (1989).

[2]This notion of anarchist typology owes something to Georg Lukàcs's theory of typicality in the novel. In the preface to his *Studies in European Realism* Lukàcs describes the type as "a peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and situations" (6). This metonymic representation of the general through the particular implies in its revealing of absolute historical truth a movement beyond ideology: traditional realism, for Lukàcs, "transforms the positive and negative elements of bourgeois life into 'typical' situations and reveals them for what they are" (*Meaning* 68). Here, on the contrary, I see types as themselves ideologically produced and instrumental in the attempt to contain anarchism discursively.

Chapter One

Constructions of Anarchism in British Culture, 1885-1914.

One of the more famous literary uses of the term *anarchy* occurs in Yeats's poem "The Second Coming," published in 1921:

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction; while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity. (3-8)

Yeats's words, written a decade after the end of the Continental outrages nevertheless exemplify the ambivalence with which the threat of anarchy, and its cause, anarchism, was regarded in much of British cultural discourse at the end of the nineteenth century. Anarchism was a "blood-dimmed tide," an apocalyptic inevitability marked by the "passionate intensity" of fanatics and against which the weakened convictions of an etiolated social order could offer little defence. At the same time, the fear of social chaos occasioned by anarchism was tempered by a removed contempt; anarchism was a threat, certainly, but despite its association with a sinister and calculating reason that couched itself in international conspiracy, it was the

threat of "mere" barbarism, disguising its assault on civilization behind seductively misleading doctrines.

These *fin-de-siècle* connotations of the term *anarchy* constituted the most recent development of what, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, had been its predominant sense. By the time Yeats comes to use the word, however, it had undergone various transformations of meaning that yielded an apparently confusing usage. In the 1880s and 90s *anarchy* was a multivalent term that meant different things to different commentators, depending on their ideological bent. A brief account of the term's history will therefore help elucidate these several meanings, in addition to serving two other purposes. It will indicate, first of all, the historical weight of anarchy's connotations of chaos and disorder, and therefore the considerable traditional significance with which alternate meanings emerging at the end of the nineteenth century had to contend. Secondly, it will reveal the changing political specificity of this traditional significance, the uses to which the general sense of the term were put to identify certain sectors of society, as well as certain other societies, as sources of anarchic threat.

Yeats's use of the term *anarchy* partakes of a cultural attitude toward the absence of political government that implies disorder and lawlessness. This sense has prevailed in general English usage since at least the middle of the

sixteenth century (Marshall 487). In Richard Taverner's 1569 translation of Erasmus's *Proverbs*, for example, anarchy is the turbulent alternative to monarchical government, in which

> That commonalitie is nothing worth that is not governed by the authoritie of a Prince ... where is Anarchie and no Monarchie, I meane, where one head and ruler is not, but every man as a Lord doth what him lusteth, there is nothing well done. (42-43)

By the Civil War this sense of anarchy as a principle of disorder inseparable from the absence of monarchy is amplified to cosmic dimensions: in 1674, for example, Milton in *Paradise Lost* applies the term to his description of the universal disorder preceding the divine plan, referring to it as a realm

> where eldest Night
> And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
> Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
> Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
> (II: 891-7)

Anarchy is presided over by Satan, "the anarch old," (II: 988) and is thus the demonic opposite of creation. This negative, anti-creative sense is exploited half a century later in 1728 by Pope in the final lines of *The Dunciad:*

> Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;

Light dies before thy uncreating word;
Thy head, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall
And universal darkness buries all. (IV: 653-6)

By the end of the eighteenth century the opposition of order and anarchy was firmly established in English linguistic usage. At the time of the French Revolution, however, this traditional binary connotation begins slowly to be eroded by alternate usages. The Revolution and Napoleonic wars occasioned an opportunity for many British commentators to confirm the associations of anarchy with political disorder and to identify that disorder with France. Carlyle laments that "Without ... true sovereigns, temporal and spiritual, I see nothing possible but an anarchy; the hatefullest of things," (*Heroes* 124) and sees France as the source of "the open violent rebellion ... of disimprisoned Anarchy" (*French* 1:170). Anarchy is an affront to social and divine order once again, though this time it is ideologically exploited to shore up anti-Revolutionary and anti-French sentiment. It is identified, furthermore, as a form of criminality. In a letter to Edmund Burke written in 1796, William Fitzwilliam cautions against celebrations of Napoleon's armistice with Austria, warning that "All the dangers of such a world of anarchy and crime still will remain to the civilised world ... it makes one shudder" (*Burke* 369). Burke's fears of "the wild boar of the Gallic Forests, who would come hither to root up and

to trample down the British harvests" (370) are echoed in subsequent accounts in which the presence of potentially anarchic elements in British society is explained in terms of French infiltration. Describing working class agitation in the *Quarterly Review* in 1812, for example, Southey is sceptical of the allegation that "some of the anarchist writers are in the pay of France," maintaining instead that "the enemy [has no occasion] to hire [such] agents when there are so many who act for him gratuitously" (346). This infiltration is therefore spiritual, an incursion not of revolutionary resources but of intellectual Jacobinism (345), the "spirit [of which] had ... evaporated from the top of the vessel [of society], its dregs were settled at the bottom" (346). In addition to being associated with foreigners, therefore, anarchy is thus reaffirmed as mob-rule, every man doing "what him lusteth," and identified specifically with revolt of the lower orders.

On the other hand, anarchy begins to be associated at around the same time not with the lower classes but with their religious, monarchical and legal oppression. Following the Peterloo massacre of 1819, for example, Shelley condemns the chaos of arbitrary and tyrannical government in "The Mask of Anarchy," in which the allegorical figure of Anarchy declares, "I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW," as he passes "Over English land .../ Trampling to a mire of blood/ The adoring multitudes" (39-41). Shelley

here elaborates an alternate significance of anarchy that had been initiated by William Godwin's critique in *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) of the "brute engine" of political government (2:212). Unlike later anarchist theorists, however, Shelley uses the term anarchy in a negative sense that reveals his redefinition of the term to be less semantic than political: anarchy is still the "hatefullest" of chaotic conditions, but one that is attributed to arbitrary and chaotic oppression from above rather than to disorder from below.

A few decades after the Revolution, however, the term anarchy begins to acquire a positive value with the emergence of the anarchist movement. In 1840, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, in a work entitled *What Is Property?* wrote that

> Politics is the science of freedom; the government of man by man, under whatever name it is disguised, is oppression: the high perfection of society consists in the union of order and anarchy. (quoted in Joll 54)

Proudhon's insistence, like Godwin's, that anarchy -- the absence of external government -- itself constitutes a form of order commences the tradition of nineteenth century anarchist thought. In general, the various strands of this tradition view all forms of government as coercive infringements on individual freedom, the emancipation of which, through revolution, would inaugurate a new type of society based not on law but on voluntary association. In

the work of anarchist theorists -- among them Michael Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin and Leo Tolstoy in Russia, Elisée Reclus in France, Errico Malatesta in Italy, and Benjamin Tucker and Emma Goldman in the United States -- the Shelleyan critique of oppressive government is elaborated into a variety of related political theories. Simultaneously, however, the sense of the word that Shelley employs to describe oppressive government is changed: anarchy becomes for the first time a positive term, referring to a desirable social condition.

To those who advocated the virtues of government as such, therefore, the rise of anarchism in the nineteenth century posed a double threat. It seemed, first, to represent a concerted attack on civilization itself and all of civilization's defining institutions. It did so, furthermore, by destabilizing the very language by which society understood itself. Prior to Proudhon, anarchy was by definition a derogatory term, employed negatively by conservatives and radicals alike. The order/anarchy opposition was the ideological binary in terms of which society constituted itself as a norm of order against anarchic chaos. Now, however, this deeply entrenched cultural opposition was itself collapsing with the appropriation by anarchism of anarchy as a positive term. Thus a linguistic confusion attended the apparent social and political disorder anarchism threatened.

This new sense of the term was articulated in the works of anarchist theorists like Bakunin's *Statism and Anarchy* and Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, as well as in grassroots propaganda disseminated through journals like *Freedom*, *Liberty*, *The Torch*, and *Anarchist*, that began to appear in the 1880s and 90s. It had to vie, however, with increased fears of anarchism in the mainstream press and popular fiction that emphasized the traditionally negative sense of the term. These fears articulated themselves partly through an emerging catalogue of anarchist stereotypes, an 'anarchist typology,' that served a dual purpose. By invoking the spectres of untrammelled egotism, demonic tyranny, mob violence, class mixing, foreign incursion and universal destruction this typology elicited the danger supposedly inherent in anarchism. Balanced against this first purpose, however, anarchist typology exploited the reductive power of the stereotype to produce a series of images of easily identifiable and often ridiculous anarchists. By being slotted into a kind of loose taxonomy the anarchist could be labelled and the threat he posed defused.

For most of the rest of this chapter I will document the emergence of this typology by showing how the thought and practice of some major anarchist figures, as well as certain anarchist-related events, were ideologically constructed within British culture. In doing so, however, I

would emphasize two things. The production of anarchist typology, first of all, did not constitute a single unified project. It was the result, rather, of various responses to anarchism in the press, popular fiction and sociological and criminological discourse that independently generated a more general taxonomy of anarchist caricatures. These caricatures were continually legitimized by a process of "intertextual authentication" (Leps 109), in which the mutual exchange of stereotypes between the different kinds of writing just mentioned confirmed those stereotypes as instances of truth. Despite its considerable influence on the cultural imagination, however, this economy of stereotypes was not absolutely airtight, as the existence of a small anarchist press indicates, and as two novels I discuss briefly at the end of chapter that provide alternate accounts of anarchism show.

The reductive function of these caricatures, secondly, always implies to some extent the other, cautionary function of anarchist typology, according to which anarchism constituted a threat. Sometimes this threat was made explicit through the attribution of dangerous characteristics to a particular 'type' of anarchist. Even when the image of the anarchist in the newspapers and popular fiction was that of an innocuous and absurd crackpot, however, his or her very representation as such indicated the presence of a cultural anxiety about the

possibilities of anarchist revolution. The caricatures of shabby, deranged fanatics or revolutionary vegetarians, ridiculous in themselves, that for the most part constitute anarchism's legacy in Britain, are the record of this fear.

The existence of this fear is in itself a curious fact of late nineteenth-century British culture, for which a number of causes can be suggested. George Woodcock's contention that English anarchism was a marginal movement is certainly true.[1] It was limited almost exclusively to London, where it began in the East End in the early 1880s. Its first incarnations were in the form of the English Revolutionary Society, a large proportion of the membership of which were German socialist refugees, and the Labour Emancipation League, which affiliated itself with the Marxist Social Democratic Federation in 1884. When this body split in the same year over personal and ideological disagreements with its leader H.M. Hyndman, anarchists formed a significant contingent within the newly formed Socialist League. After gaining a majority within the League in 1889 they took over the editorship of its publication, the *Commonweal* from William Morris.[2] Under the direction of H.B. Samuel, however, the now explicitly anarchist journal began to fail; six years later the remains of the Socialist League merged with the anarchist Freedom

Group, whose publication *Freedom* had been partially started by Kropotkin in 1886.

Kropotkin, the major anarchist theorist most familiar to the British intellectual scene, lived in England for 30 years (1886 to 1917) moving there after being released from a five year prison sentence for subversive activities in France (Marshall 314). Despite his considerable organizational work with the Freedom Group, Kropotkin recognized the failure of English anarchism at the grassroots level, calling it "*anarchie de salon* -- epicurean, a little Nietzschean, very *snobbish*" (quoted in Miller 169). Indeed, anarchism existed at the fringes of Marxism which itself failed to take root in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century. One reason for this, as John Callaghan suggests, is that Britain's "relatively liberal institutions ... blunt[ed] the edge of working-class protests," thus preventing the development of "general intransigence and a radical socialist consciousness" (10).[3] Under these conditions anarchism existed only in marginal pockets, most often among refugees from the more repressive European regimes. The Rose Street Club, home of the English Revolutionary Society, the Autonomie Club, and the International Club were gathering places for such refugees, German, French and Jewish respectively. By the same token anarchist journals, with the exceptions of the *Commonweal*, *Freedom*, and the Yiddish *Der Arbeiter Fraint*, were short-

lived and of small circulation; *The Torch*, *The Anarchist*, *Liberty*, *The Herald of Anarchy*, and *The Revolutionary Review* all ran for no more than three years at the outside, and most did not last for even that long. Moreover, propaganda by the deed was non-existent in Britain, the only act of anarchist related violence being the somewhat mysterious explosion at Greenwich Park on 15 February 1894 caused by a bomb that killed only the person who had been carrying it, a French anarchist named Martial Bourdin.[4]

The fascination with anarchism within various British cultural discourses at the end of the nineteenth century can therefore be said to have approached the status of a panic disproportionate to the threat posed by the movement to the structures of English society. In the case of the fiction of anarchism, Graham Holderness notes that "anarchism exerted over the minds of certain writers an influence disproportionate to its historical role in the development of British society" (122). A similar argument can be made about the newspapers, whose sanguinary constructions of anarchism contrast sharply with the lack of anarchist violence in Britain. One reason for this disproportionate fear of anarchism may have been, as Melchiori suggests, (40) its confusion with the Fenian movement which was responsible for several dynamite attacks in Britain, most notably the simultaneous explosions in Westminster Hall, the Houses of Parliament and the Tower of London in 1885. Another may

have been its confusion with other forms of socialism, a phenomenon noted by Shaw in 1891:

> ... in the columns of newspapers [which support the existing social order] all revolutionists are Socialists; all Socialists are Anarchists; and all Anarchists are incendiaries, assassins and thieves. (*Impossibilities* 68-69)

Certainly, fears of mob violence could have been instilled by various socialist agitations in London in the 1880s: the Trafalgar Square riots in January 1886, in which the Social Democratic Federation smashed the windows of fashionable clubs in Pall Mall, "Bloody Sunday," on 13 November 1887, in which police and troops attacked a demonstration of various socialist groups in Trafalgar Square, and a similar demonstration the following week in Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square. Another cause may have been a fear that European anarchism, which was visible almost exclusively in its violent capacity, would spread across the Channel into England, which saw itself as the last bastion of civilization.

A further possibility is suggested by Holderness, again in the specific case of fiction. Noting that "it is perhaps surprising that there is a fiction of anarchism at all," (122) he claims that anarchism represented a

> species of fictional ... politics [that] offered an analysis and condemnation of society which in its

> totalizing purity resembled the comprehensive moral vision of the imaginative artist. (148)

This explanation, I would argue, can be elaborated to account for the fascination with anarchism that extended beyond novels. Ideologically anarchism, notwithstanding questions from other socialists about the practicality of its prescriptions, presented, as Shaw noted in *The Impossibilities of Anarchism* (1891), the most radical critique not just of conventional government but of government as such (69). The relative size of the anarchist 'threat' was therefore secondary to its intensity. The reinforcement of the political order by the press accounts of anarchism can thus be seen as an attempt to seal an ideological breach in the way that society understood itself that, though small, was potentially far-reaching in its consequences. In addition, it is not difficult to imagine the symbolic connotations of anarchism appealing to more than writers of fiction. For the readers of this fiction, as well as for both journalists and newspaper readers, anarchism, which as Norman Cohn notes contained a strong quasi-religious component (150), can be seen as evincing the kind of apocalyptic foreboding seen in "The Second Coming." Emerging most visibly at the end of the century, demanding the utter abolition of society as it was known in the name of the establishment of a "Kingdom of Man upon Earth" (Harris 184), and apparently led by fanatics whose

opposition to the social order drove them to suicidal acts of destruction, anarchism can be seen as exerting a powerful millenarian influence on an uneasy cultural imagination that tried to compensate by classifying it as a form of dangerous and misguided utopianism.

Two general political themes can be found in the typology of British representations of anarchism at the end of the nineteenth century. By those unsympathetic to it, anarchism was understood as one of two forms of political extremism, each of which constituted a transgression of the social order. One the one hand it was a radical and tyrannical individualism that rejected all forms of rational government; on the other it was mob uprising, the annihilation of individuality in the revolt of the masses. As we shall see, these apparently contradictory representations were linked in anarchist typology in ways that allowed the exploitation of their most threatening characteristics.

Anarchism's reputation as a form of dangerous and irresponsible individualism can be seen as a hostile construction of a tenet central to the various forms of anarchist doctrine, the emancipation of the individual from the repressive and coercive machinery of the state. In its unalloyed form, this radical individualism constitutes one of the two main strands of anarchist thought. It was

preached by Godwin and Max Stirner at the end of the eighteenth century. One of its variants, the advocacy of the abolition of rent in favour of the individual's ownership of his own property and means of production, was espoused by Proudhon and Benjamin Tucker. Its more notorious proponent, though, was Michael Bakunin,[5] who called for the immediate abolition of all private property. For Bakunin, anarchism's organisation, as well as the structure of the post-revolutionary society it envisioned, was determined by the coincidence of individualism with sociality. "Man," he wrote, "is not only the most individual being on earth -- he is also the most social being" (*Political* 136):

> ... Society, preceding in time any development of humanity and fully partaking of the almighty power of natural laws, action, and manifestations, constitutes the very essence of human existence. Man is born into society, just as an ant is born into an ant-hill or a bee into a hive ... Society antedates and at the same time survives every human individual, being in this respect like Nature itself; it is eternal like Nature, or rather, having been born upon this earth, it will last as long as the earth itself. (157)

Anarchy, here, is identified with a 'natural,' organic model of society that is anti-hierarchical and hostile to all forms of political regulation. Politics begin, for

Bakunin, with the delimiting of individual freedom, which, in its untrammelled form, is the mystical cornerstone of his philosophy. It is, paradoxically, the exercising of this freedom that ensures the greatest social equity. Condemned, so to speak, to being social, humanity enacts this sociality most fully by following its 'natural' instincts.

The individualist theses of Bakunin's thought were elaborated in a different direction by Kropotkin, who exemplifies the second major strain of anarchist theory. Unlike its Bakuninite variant, Kropotkinian anarchism, or anarchist communism, emphasized the element of communality in human relations, the fact that "the greatest individual development possible [is achieved] through practising the highest communist sociability" (*Selected* 297). Individuality for Kropotkin is therefore crucial only to the extent that it clears the way for the most efficient forms of cooperation. Kropotkin justifies this emphasis on communality in scientific terms; modifying Darwinian theory to conform to his observation of animal behaviour, he privileges cooperation between and within species, rather than competition, as the determining factor in evolution, calling this principle 'mutual aid':

> The animal species, in which individual struggle has been reduced to its narrowest limits, and the practice of mutual aid has the greatest development, are

> invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous, and the most open to further progress. (*Mutual Aid* 230)

While individualist anarchism and anarcho-communism are distinguished from each other in the emphasis they place on the role of individualism, both are informed by a romantic essentialism that sees sociability as innate. Popular stereotypes of anarchists, however, represented anarchist individualism as a principle hostile to any form of communal organization. In much of British cultural discourse anarchism was identified with a monstrous egotism, a metaphysical selfishness that brooked no constraints on its pursuit of individual gratification. Certainly, anarchist thought was consciously opposed to the more prevalent view that imagined human existence in terms of orthodox evolutionism, as "a continual free fight," in T.E.Huxley's words (204) that consisted of contending wills-to-power. According to this ideology society was necessary to impose order on the chaos of nature and to cultivate civilized virtues; within Liberal social theory, for example, the 'imposition' of government was a freedom from the hostile law of nature rather than a constraint. In *Culture And Anarchy* (1869), Matthew Arnold opposed to "the anarchical tendency of our worship of freedom in and for itself" (76) the edifying and guiding principle of 'culture.' Criticizing the prevailing "English ideal ... that every one

should be free to do ... as he likes," Arnold commended culture as a force that

> indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that. (50)

Intrinsic to the social education of the "raw person" is the necessity of social hierarchy, the "ideas and habits of subordination" basic to feudalism, without which "we are in danger of drifting towards anarchy" (74-75). Culture thus constitutes a mode of government exemplified by

> *the State* -- the nation in its collective and corporate character, entrusted with stringent powers for the general advantage, and controlling individual wills in the name of an interest wider than that of individuals. (75).

As might be expected, anarchist individualism posed a threat to such "stringent powers" of the state to enforce the ideology of individual transcendence in the name of the collective good. Its materialist critique of the divine sanctioning of culture, furthermore, posed an atheistic threat to the political influence of the Church; whereas Arnold advocated a strong centralized religious establishment as crucial for effective government, Bakunin, who adopted the Proudhonian motto "neither God nor Master,"

(Marshall 80) criticized religion as a form of slave morality, in which "God being master, man is the slave" (*God* 135).

This double assault on Church and State provoked the constructions of anarchism in sociological accounts and popular fiction as a form of satanic rebellion in which anarchists, wielding bombs described as "infernal machines," flaunted the government of God and man. In a book entitled *The Illustrious Life of William McKinley, Our Martyred President*, published shortly after McKinley's assassination in 1901 and subtitled *Anarchy, Its History, Influences and Dangers, with a Sketch of the Life of the Assassin*, Murat Halstead describes anarchism as a

> litany of the devil ... taught by the wicked demagogery [*sic*] ... that preaches the ancient impracticality of a so-called Socialism that is tenacious because it feeds on ignorance and the rankling poisons that envenom reptiles. (26-7)

Anarchists, likewise, are "fellow-serpent[s who] coil in infernal communion" (77). In a similar fashion, Robert Hunter's study of anarchism and socialism, *Violence And The Labour Movement* (1914), elaborated the mythic possibilities of this comparison when it described Bakunin as a predictable but deplorable response to "the murderous oppression, the satanic infamy of the Russian government" (4). Bakunin's hostility to the state is compared to

Dante's encounter in Hell with a human form that is transformed into the double of a serpent with which it is engaged in a struggle to the death. "That there is some justification for speculation on these matters," Hunter writes, "is indicated by the heroes of Bakunin. He always meant to write the story of Prometheus, and he never spoke of Satan without an admiration that approached adoration" (5). This hero-worship is recognized, accordingly, as diabolism: "Although an atheist," Hunter claims, Bakunin "had an idol, Satan" (7). A popular fictional response to the anarchist 'threat' that participated in such demonic rhetoric was E. Douglas Fawcett's futuristic fantasy *Hartmann The Anarchist: or, The Doom of The Great City*, (1893) in which anarchists launch an aerial attack on London. The novel's protagonist and narrator, Arthur Stanley describes his adventure on board the revolutionary airship as "an Inferno," (94) and wonders, while havoc is being wreaked on London, whether he is in "Pandemonium" (147). In a passage that explicitly invokes Milton, furthermore, Stanley has the origins of anarchism explained to him, in terms similar to those employed by Hunter but which emphasize the element of monstrous rebellion: anarchists, one of Hartmann's crew tells him, are "the Frankenstein's monsters of civilization which are born to hate their father" (82).

Accompanying these Satanic connotations of anarchism in Fawcett's novel is the suggestion of the movement's conspiratorial organization. Diabolism suggested the existence of a subterranean threat to the natural order that is organized by demonic machination, like the plotting of Milton's Satan against mankind. Fawcett's Stanley is thus told by an anarchist that "the day when the first bomb falls will witness outbreaks in every great city in Europe. We have some 120,000 adherents in London, many more in Paris, Berlin, and elsewhere ..." (83). In British newspaper discourse this supposition of anarchist conspiracy was common. Despite its unresolved nature, the Greenwich Park Mystery, as it was referred to in the headlines, lent fuel to French accusations that Britain, where many European anarchists sought asylum from political repression, was the centre of a revolutionary conspiracy. These accusations were taken up by the British press. On 16 February 1894, the day after the Greenwich explosion, the *Manchester Guardian* announced that "The London police have discovered an Anarchist conspiracy which it is believed will prove to be the most desperate of any revolutionary plot that has ever had its headquarters in London". On the same day *The Times* declared that "The London police have discovered an Anarchist conspiracy," and the *Daily Chronicle* concluded on 17 February that a police raid on the Autonomie Club furnished "more proof of the close connection between the

Anarchists in London and their fellow conspirators on the Continent".

This belief in the existence of a sinister anarchist organization was inconsistent, however, with the construction of anarchism as a form of fanatical individualism. In *Hartmann*, for example, Stanley is surprised by the apparent incongruity between the desperate appearance of the aerial anarchists and the fact that "they control ... vast societies" (105). In newspapers and popular fiction this apparent disjuncture was resolved by combining its conflicting elements, thus allowing anarchism to be seen as the tyranny of a single charismatic leader who enlisted slavish elements in the service of his own untrammelled individualism. The hierarchical organization of these elements became a motif common within anarchist typology. Thus Hartmann, "the free and independent anarchist of the *Atilla* [is] dogmatic and brutal" (64), a "Nero" (2) who, with the assistance of his "right hand," Schwartz, (60) leads an international army of anarchists over whom he has power of life and death; Stanley learns, for instance, that he has recently shot two revolutionaries who had become "rusty" (73). Similar suggestions of conspiracy will be seen in Hoffendahl's enigmatic organization in *The Princess Casamassima* and in the organization led by the Council of Days in Chesterton.

The attribution of conspiratorial tendencies to anarchism, it should be noted, was not entirely an invention of the newspapers and popular fiction. In the atmosphere of anarchist panic, assumptions about his aspect of anarchist organization were fed for example, by Bakunin's notorious blueprints for secret revolutionary societies. The first of these came to light in 1848, during Bakunin's pre-anarchist support of nationalist revolution when he proposed an organisation governed by "a single dictatorial authority" (*Confession* 112) that was to be divided into three sections, each of which corresponded to a different sector of society (petty bourgeoisie, youth and peasants). Each of these sections was to be "subordinated to a strict hierarchy and to unconditional discipline" and "linked by a central committee" of which Bakunin was to be the "secret leader":

> all the main threads of the movement would have been concentrated in my hands and I could have been assured that the contemplated revolution ... did not stray from the course I had prescribed for it. (118-19)

This type of organizing, which would seem to confirm anti-revolutionary fears, continued into Bakunin's later anarchist period. In 1864, while living in Italy, for example, he founded a Florentine Brotherhood which a year later became the International Brotherhood. Like the proposed revolutionary dictatorship of 1848, the Brotherhood was structured along rigidly hierarchical lines, and was to

extend invisibly throughout Europe. Members of National Families from each country would report to the International Family, a supreme body of seasoned insurrectionists, whose role was to direct the revolution (Woodcock *Anarchism* 134). In 1866, boasting of the size of the organization, Bakunin claimed that the Brotherhood was established in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, England, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Poland and Russia (134).

In fact, however -- and despite the convenience of these fantasies for the confirmation of establishment fears -- no evidence for the actual existence of such a widespread society, or any of Bakunin's imagined conspiracies exists.[6] Moreover, no other major anarchist theorists advocated such organisations. Apart from its existence in Bakunin's imagination, international conspiracy was an ideological construction used to confirm the subversive potential of anarchism for groups hostile to it.[7] As a calculating, purposeful conspiracy, furthermore, anarchism could be seen as a sinister organization of the mob that combined strategy with the mindless chaos of the lower orders in revolt. Conspiracy allowed for the coexistence of these opposed constructions by suggesting that despotic revolutionary leaders manipulated the masses to serve their own ends. Even the most highly disciplined conspiracy, therefore, was dedicated ultimately to social chaos, the unleashing of mob violence held in check just long enough for it to emerge at

the most strategic moment. This fear of mob violence, the violation of bourgeois decorum and property rights, combined significantly with a related form of social transgression represented by the repudiation by many major anarchist figures of their aristocratic origins. By renouncing their class privilege for anarchism, activists like Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta threatened to subvert the system of social rank. They therefore represented another form of dangerous class mixing, one that complemented the social levelling threatened by the revolt of the masses.

The Bakhtinian notion of the carnivalesque is helpful here in understanding the nature of the threat posed by these transgressions of social hierarchy. Carnival, according to Bakhtin, is a ritual central to classical, mediaeval and Renaissance social life that offered to its participants an escape from the social strictures of everyday life. During carnival,

> The laws, prohibitions, and restrictions that determine the structure and order of ordinary ... life are suspended ... what is suspended first of all is hierarchical structure ... that is, everything from socio-historical inequality to any other form of inequality among people ... All *distance* between people is suspended, and a special carnival category comes into effect: *free and familiar contact among people* ... (*Dostoevsky's* 122-23)

Carnival is thus a process of social equalization in which class hierarchy is ritually disintegrated. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White note, moreover, the idea of carnival gains in critical fruitfulness when "it is displaced into the broader concept of symbolic inversion and transgression," (18) thus allowing it to be understood "not simply [as] a ritual feature of European culture," but as a "*mode of understanding*" (6) that transcends specific instances of carnival festivities.

This more general formulation is especially helpful for my purposes here, since by the nineteenth century examples of pure carnival had virtually disappeared (*Dostoevsky's* 130). Indeed, carnival survives after the Renaissance in more general and dispersed forms of social transgression. As Dominick LaCapra observes, however, even these more general transgressive possibilities are severely limited through processes of "suppression and repression" (*History* 11) by the time about which I am writing. To make things worse, accompanying this reduction of transgressive potential is the more basic problem, pointed out by Terry Eagleton, that carnival is "a *licensed* affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony" (*Benjamin* 148). The carnivalesque may thus be merely the illusion of release from hierarchical social structures, a form of ideologically produced and condoned transgression intended to confirm the socio-cultural divisions it ostensibly disrupts.

While recognizing factors such as these that inhibit the genuinely disruptive nature of carnival, however, we can observe that, as in the case of anarchism, certain circumstances -- namely revolutionary situations that threaten the very institutions by which carnival is licensed -- release the possibility of more socially dangerous carnivalesque activity. Stallybrass and White suggest as much when they note that while for long periods

> carnival may be a stable and cyclical ritual with no noticeable politically transformative effect ... given the presence of sharpened political antagonism it may often act as *catalyst* and *site of actual symbolic struggle*. (14)

Bakhtin points out, similarly, that "The category of the familiar contact" that the carnivalesque represents "is also responsible for the special way mass actions are organized" (*Dostoevsky's* 122-23).

The domain in which the symbolic struggle of mass action may occur most relevantly here is the value-laden area of social space, in particular the distinction between public and private property. Discussing the Greenham Common protest against the presence of American cruise missiles in Britain, for example, Stallybrass and White note how the aim of the protesters is partially achieved "by transgressing the neat boundaries of private and public property ... occupying common land in the name of the people" (24). This

notion of common land, essential to carnival, is the spatial dimension of its cultural transgression. Bakhtin, for example, notes how the public square was the "symbol of communal performance," and that carnival "invaded the home" (128). Part of the threat posed by anarchism was just such a collapsing, through action inspired by its egalitarian demands, of the opposition between public and private space. The image of the invasion of bourgeois space by a revolutionary mob was a potent sign of the anarchist peril.

It is thus significant, I think, that the final battle of *Hartmann* occurs in Hyde Park, a site powerfully charged with memories of carnivalesque transgression. Anarchism's conflation with other forms of socialism, noted earlier, meant that in addition to being recognized as a specific form of political evil, it was also identified with a more general attack on social hierarchy. One of the more salient examples in British cultural memory of such attacks -- perhaps more so after the socialist disturbances of the mid 1880s -- was the Hyde Park riots of 1866. As Richard Shannon notes, the choice of Hyde Park as the site of a protest by the Reform League, an organisation dedicated to extending suffrage to workers, was a deliberately provocative one since the park, a favourite location for bourgeois recreation, was recognized as a symbol of middle-class exclusiveness (61). Though ostensibly public, therefore, Hyde Park was in fact a kind of quasi-private

space that was violently invaded during the riots when demonstrators occupied it for two days after clashing with the police, uprooting park railings and trampling the flowerbeds.

The carnivalesque elements of this event can be discerned in the reaction of Arnold who, observing these "forcible irruptions" into the park (204) from his balcony, considered the riots a premonition of the impending anarchy that threatened to engulf the nation. Excoriating the wilful lawlessness of the lower orders, Arnold explicitly links the riots to forms of working class recreation characteristic of carnival. "The rough," he writes

> is just asserting his personal liberty a little, going where he likes, assembling where he likes, bawling as he likes, hustling as he likes ... if he is stopped from making Hyde Park a bear-garden or the streets impassable, he says he is being butchered by the aristocracy. (80-81)

Arnold's indignation here articulates a need to stem the roughness of popular forms that has invaded from the external, public domain into the private sanctuary of bourgeois self-identity. Here the anarchy of "doing as one likes" and the breaking up of civic order represented by the obstruction of the streets are negative constructions of mass protest that see it as a form of unconstrained and vulgar individualism. Read symbolically, the Hyde Park

riots can be understood as the transformation of a merely ostensibly public space into a space forcibly occupied by the public in which carnivalesque rituals are enacted: the forced mixing of classes symbolizing the eradication of social inequality; the transgression of official boundaries represented by the entry into the park, in which the uprooting of the perimeter railings erases the distinction between public and private domains; and the scandalous assault on middle-class aesthetics symbolized by the trampling of the flower beds.

The aesthetic threat posed by anarchism -- which, as we shall see later, constitutes its primary danger in James -- is similarly evidenced in Hartmann, where it takes the form of parody, which Bakhtin (*Dostoevsky's* 127) identifies as a basic component of the carnivalesque assault on official culture. Fawcett's anarchists are "ruffians" (127) and "vulgar dynamitards" (102) who shock the narrator with their "vile parody" of Tennyson's poem "The Splendour Falls," which they transform into a paean to dynamite:

> The dynamite falls on castle walls,
> And splendid buildings old with story.
> The column shakes, the tyrant quakes,
> And the wild wreckage leaps in glory.
> Throw, comrades, throw; set the wild echoes flying;
> Throw, comrades; answer wretches, dying, dying,
> dying. (102)

The association of anarchism and the carnivalesque that I have made here can also be seen in the opening pages of Edward Jenkins's novel *A Week of Passion: or, the Dilemma of Mr George Barton the Younger*, (1885) the plot of which incidentally involves anarchist activity. In the first chapter of the novel, entitled "A Sensation," an anarchist bomb explodes in Regent Circus, a site whose name signifies a locus of tension between aristocratically sanctioned hierarchy and carnivalesque subversion (the circus being, as Bakhtin notes (*Dostoevsky's* 131), one of the modern forms in which carnival survives). The outrage occurs in "a scene of motley and vivacious tumult," at a pressure point of social hierarchy, a "narrow lock, or strait" (3) where all classes converge:

> The prismatic foam and spray from the aristocratic fountains of Mayfair, Belgravia, or Tyburnia flashed lightly against the dull, foul, turbid torrents that poured from a thousand fetid sources of misery and crime; and strong, impetuous currents of trade rushed brusquely by the calmer and more indolent eddies of wealth and pleasure. (3)

This mixing of heterogeneous class elements yields a situation dangerously close to social levelling. The precarious dynamic equilibrium of the scene, in which the "vulgar ruck" of wagons brushes up against the "rank and beauty" of fine horses, (3) is one in which social hierarchy

is only barely preserved. This complex interpenetration of class thus contains the possibility of cataclysmic breakdown: as with Arnold, obstructing the flow of traffic symbolizes a breakdown of order that "would choke up the passage, change the current into a whirlpool, and set the surging tides a-roaring all about it in hideous tumult" (3). At the heart of this whirlpool, the explosion, which occurs at the "very center" of the Circus (4) is a point where social division is annihilated by the absolute compression of its disparate elements. The effect of such an event on the aristocracy is visible in the immediate aftermath of the blast:

> When the first movements of consternation had subsided, it was seen that a space had been cleared in the middle of the Circus, not by the dire effects of the explosion, but by that strange, instinctive terror which decentralizes a mob in the midst of which some catastrophe has just happened. In this free space nothing was to be seen except [an] elegant cab, lying on its side ... [its] young and fashionable [occupant] extended motionless, with the cigarette still clenched between his teeth ... (4)

Anarchist violence thus enforces an extreme and deadly form of carnivalesque class-mixing. In the symbolic tableau described here, the destruction of the aristocracy, the creation of an absence at the center of society, and the

displacement of the instinct-governed mob from its proper place are all linked. It is by making way for an omnibus, and symbolically renouncing his aristocratic privilege, moreover, that the anarchist's victim places himself in the position to be killed by the explosion.

But anarchism threatened more than the social hierarchy at the national level. In the newspapers and popular fiction it also represented a transgression of international borders that provoked considerable xenophobic response. Attacks on the notion of patriotism, what Tolstoy called "a slavish enthralment to those in power," (quoted in Marshall 374) threatened the principle of imperialist competition and encouraged subversion of the national state. Such attacks were reinscribed within the dominant imperialist ideology of the period as a more extreme and insidious incarnation of foreign aggression. Anarchism thus became a clandestine infiltration of foreign elements that transposed to the global level the transgression of the inside/outside opposition represented by the interpenetration of private and public space in domestic class conflict. Following McKinley's assassination, Halstead linked the assassin's claims of anarchist affiliation with his Polish heritage:

> It is time to classify the anarchist as an outsider, an invader. He is a man who has no country and redhanded against all men [*sic*] not of the school of murder.

> He feeds on false and foolish phrases, and though he may be born on this soil he is not an American. In the case of the assailant of President McKinley, he is the product of the worst of foreignism, though he was born in one of the cities on the Lakes; he comes of the despotism of Russia and the oppression of Poland and is as alien in his nature as in his nomenclature. (26)

Certainly anarchism had European sources. Moreover, the itinerancy of its more famous representatives -- Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta -- that was necessitated by their attempts to escape repression could be seen as a dangerous mobility and flaunting of national borders. In the United States, socialist tendencies were attributed to European immigrants whose attempts to demonstrate against working conditions were violently dispersed by police. Halstead's cautionary sermon articulates this discrimination based on class and ethnicity. In Britain similar discrimination, though less violent, was not nonexistent; in 1885, for example, a police raid occurred on the German anarchist International Club (Quail 48) and foreign socialists were often harassed (40-41) Such events were in reaction to an influx of refugees from crackdowns on socialism in Europe. While France accused Britain of harbouring European anarchists who plotted against their countries of origin, Britain saw France as a source of nascent revolution. In the aftermath of the Greenwich Park

explosion, these opinions coincided. On 16 February the *Daily Chronicle* spoke of anarchists as "this most objectionable of all possible emigrants to London," while on the 17th *The Guardian* declared the "international revolutionary conspiracy" to be controlled by "foreign desperadoes who have for so long been allowed to make London the headquarters of their nefarious operations". In a description of the Autonomie Club on 19 February, similarly, *The Times* noted how

> the assembled company, consisting almost exclusively of Frenchmen and French women, the latter being the choicest specimens of *petroleuses*, whiled away their time by singing the "Carmagnole" and a sonorous chorus in which the word dynamitard, in French, was conspicuous, and by invoking every kind of destruction upon the *bourgeoisie* and upon *la propriete*.

Unlike at the beginning of the century when the Revolution represented the spawning ground of foreign anarchy, constructions of anarchism in the 1880s and 90s tended to shift the emphasis away from France to Germany. Several factors determined this shift. One was the influence of Nietzsche, whose work was often associated with anarchism (an aspect dealt with in my chapter on *The Secret Agent*). Another was the influx of German political refugees into Britain after attempts on the Kaiser's life provoked the institution of severe anti-socialist laws in 1878. The

English Revolutionary Society, founded through affiliations with the German Social Democratic Party in 1877, was a gathering place for these refugees (Quail 8). It was also instrumental in the dissemination of revolutionary and anarchist propaganda back into Germany.

A leading figure in this propagandizing was Johann Most who edited the journal *Freiheit* that was smuggled into Germany and in 1880 became explicitly anarchist in its sympathies (11). Before Most's prosecution in 1881 and the subsequent removal of *Freiheit* to Switzerland and then the United States, the paper became notorious for its applauding of the assassination of Alexander II by Russian nihilists and Lord Frederick Cavendish by Fenians in 1882. Despite the presence of revolutionaries of other nationalities -- the English Revolutionary Society, for example, consisted of five separate national sections (8) -- Most's notoriety made Germans appear to be at the centre of British anarchist activities. This identification of anarchism with Germany can be seen in the character of Hoffendahl in James, as well as in Chesterton's Professor de Worms. Discursive constructions of foreign anarchists suggest also a fear of German militancy following the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. The crushing of the Paris Commune by Bismarck's troops -- ironically, a mythic topos within anarchist lore -- symbolized the replacement of one foreign antagonist with another. Thus the name of Hartmann and

Schwartz's airship, the *Attila*, suggests an assault on civilization by Germanic barbarians.

On this issue, imperialist ideology sometimes conflicted with anarchist panic. The threat of German militancy in particular is one of the few contexts in which anarchist activity was in some sense condoned. Describing the attempt of the anarchist Schultz on the life of the Kaiser by way of a bomb that releases a lethal odour, a character in Jenkins's novel remarks that

> old Kaiser William is used to stinks, for he lives on the Spree, to which a sewer is cologne-water; but this would have done for the --- old hypocrite if it had only once got within reach of his nostrils, and might have saved Europe a good deal of anxiety. (121)

In some of these representations, 'typical' attributes of German personality -- clinical precision, prodigious but devious intelligence -- often converged in the figure of the terrorist chemist who displaced the frenzied image of the impassioned French revolutionary with one of icy and inhuman malevolence. The type of the anarchist as arch-conspirator was thus confirmed as a peculiarly scientific evil genius. In his fanatical puritanism and relationship to Nietzschean thought, Conrad's Professor, another twisted chemist, is a slightly displaced version of this type. A more direct example is Jenkins's Schultz who is described as

> A German, a man of good education -- graduated from Bonn -- took to chemistry, in which he became very strong, and might have made a fortune, for he is immensely clever. If anybody could have discovered the philosopher's stone or the transmutation of metals, he was the man. (121)

Instead he makes bombs, the destructive effects of which, it seemed, were the sole end of anarchism. Thus Hartmann is "a ruthless destroyer" (143) who plots the reduction of London to "a mere shambles" (101). The Professor, similarly, is a walking bomb. This construction of anarchists as innately violent can be seen as a response to outrages in Europe and the United States, as well as to certain statements of Bakunin, whom writers like Hunter considered "The Father of Terrorism" (3). Bakunin's famous dictum "the passion for destruction is a creative passion, too" ("Reaction" 58) suggested that anarchism was the pursuit of destruction for its own sake. Even more damning in this respect was the evidence for destructive lust that came from Bakunin's brief association with Sergei Nechaev, a Russian revolutionary whom he met in Geneva in 1869. Impressing Bakunin as being "brutal to the point of cruelty" (quoted in Marshall 284), Nechaev collaborated with him on several pamphlets, including the notorious *Principles of Revolution* and *Revolutionary Catechism*, the precise authorship of which remains controversial[8]. The *Catechism*

identifies the revolutionary as the "merciless enemy" of society who "if he continues to live in [the world] ... it is only the more certainly to destroy it." All activity, it states, is to be subordinated to the interests of the revolution, in the interests of which any degree of violence is allowed (quoted in Pomper 90-91). *Principles*, for example, declares that

> Not recognizing any kind of activity other than that of annihilation, we agree that the forms in which this activity can appear are extremely varied. Poison, the knife, the noose, etc.! ... Revolution consecrates everything equally in this struggle. (82)

Bakunin's later repudiation of these views in a letter to Nechaev (2 June 1870, Marshall 284) is more consistent with the views of other theorists whose attitudes ranged from a recognition of the unfortunate necessity of violence to a complete rejection of it. Kropotkin felt that anarchist goals could be achieved only through insurrection, but was concerned with "how to attain the greatest results with the most limited amount of civil war, the smallest number of victims" (*Memoirs* 191). Propaganda by the deed he felt was permissible only if directed against institutions, not individuals, and performed in the interests of the revolution. His defence of bombers like Henry -- "they are not to blame; they are driven mad by horrible conditions" (quoted Marshall 316) -- was a subtle attempt to explain

their actions while distancing them from the anarchist movement. Others, like Malatesta, felt that "The main plank of Anarchism is the removal of violence from human relations" (53). Such pacifism was shared by other anarchists such as Rudolph Rocker, Gustav Landauer -- "every act of force is dictatorship" (quoted in Lunn 135) -- and Tolstoy, who criticized those who "are mistaken ... in thinking that anarchy can be instituted by a revolution" (quoted in Marshall 375).

These non-violent forms of anarchism corresponded in anarchist typology to the figure of the milk-and-water anarchist, effete, etiolated, a vegetarian (like Tolstoy), a characterization that parodied descriptions of Kropotkin by Shaw and Wilde as being remarkable for his "saintliness" (Woodcock *Anarchism* 154), "a man with [the] soul of [a] beautiful white Christ" (Wilde 131). Conrad's Michaelis is such a pathetically otherworldly figure. Occasionally, when combined with the insistence that anarchists were essentially violent, this type yielded absurdly paradoxical figures, like Syme's predecessor in the chair of Thursday in Chesterton who dies "through his faith in a hygienic mixture of chalk and water as a substitutes for milk, which beverage he regarded as barbaric, and as involving cruelty to the cow," while at the same time plotting "the great dynamite coup of Brighton, which, under happier circumstances, ought to have killed everybody on the pier" (31).

Anarchism was thus constituted by cultural discourse in a variety of ways that were often contradictory but grouped together as necessary to produce particularly threatening types; anarchist typology consisted by turns of demonic egotism, conspiracy, mob violence, foreign invasion, absolute destruction, rarefied otherworldliness. In addition, although the existence of these stereotypes indicates, as I noted earlier, an *implicit* cultural fear, they symbolized varying degrees of *explicit* danger. Anarchists were, in one perspective, innocuous, bungling crackpots, incompetent on both the practical and theoretical levels. Thursday's failed attempt on the Brighton pier exemplifies this inadequacy, as does Schultz's (121) and Hartmann's attempts on the life of the German Crown Prince, in which the latter "tries to blow up a prince and destroys an arch and an applewoman" (12). This practical ineptitude corresponds philosophically to a ridiculous utopianism, as in the case of Michaelis, or Hartmann, who declares that "We are Rousseaus who advocate a return to a simpler life" (84); and, as with the image of the annihilating vegetarian, the attribution of incompetence to anarchists involves contradictions -- for example, in the fact that the bumbling Hartmann is also responsible for the devastation of London.

This element of incompetence in anarchist theory and practice led to constructions of anarchists as, at best, failed criminals. As Marie-Christine Leps observes,

criminology at the end of the century was characterized by "a general acceptance of crime and criminals as normal, inevitable occurrences to be faced with rational methods of control" (1). The reduction of anarchism to the status of a crime can thus be seen as an attempt to contain it within a category that, while recognizing its transgressive nature, allowed it to be classified within the normal range of social activity. Constructions of anarchism as a form of crime often followed a tautological reasoning: because many anarchists -- Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta among them -- had been in prison, they were therefore criminals. Furthermore, because some theorists, like Elisée Reclus, regarded theft as the legitimate reappropriation of property stolen by the state, anarchists were no better than petty thieves. The redistribution of social wealth required by anarchist theory (and by socialism in general) was similarly criminal, and, as in the case of foreigness, was sometimes seen not as an alternative to capitalism but as an insidious renegade form of it. Chesterton's anarchist conspiracy, run by the wealthiest men in the world, falls into this category, as does that described in Jenkins as

> ... those secret criminal organizations which are always existing in the great Continental cities, some of which conceal vulgar criminal objects under the disguise of political associations ... Many of these men are really political agitators ... They have so

> befogged themselves with socialistic ideas that they have actually succeeded in persuading themselves there is no difference between *meum* and *tuum*. A man when he is persuaded of that is, so far as all human law is concerned, already a criminal in principle. (145)

In other accounts, the claim that anarchists were "miscreants" (*Hartmann* 23) was attributed not to ideas but to heredity. In 1891, the renowned Italian criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso published a study of "The Physiognomy of the Anarchist" in the Chicago journal *The Monist*, in which he asserted that anarchists "possess the degenerative characters common to criminals and to the insane, being anomalies and possessing these traits by heredity" (339). These traits, including "facial asymmetry, enormous jaws, developed frontal sinus [and] protruding ears," (338) distinguished anarchists from 'true' revolutionaries, who "are almost always geniuses or saints, and have all a marvellously harmonious physiognomy" (336).

As its reputation as a dire threat to civilization implied, however, anarchy often made the attempt to contain it within criminological discourses seem inadequate. Even Lombroso recognized the political nature of anarchist 'crime,' arguing that while they "are frequently of the criminal type, I do not mean that ... even the most violent anarchists ... are true criminals" (339). Lombroso's argument, which I will examine in greater detail in Chapter

Three, in fact constitutes a rare positive understanding of anarchism's resistance to criminological techniques. The majority of cases were the opposite: anarchism, to the extent that it was constructed as a crime, was understood in terms of "Earlier [nineteenth] century apprehensions of crime as a symptom of severe and threatening social trauma" (Leps 39). This failure of criminological discourse to contain anarchism effectively may partly be due to the fact that much anarchism claimed to base itself on scientific principles, thereby undermining the attempt by the science of crime to rationalize it on the same grounds. Anarchism, moreover, was not susceptible to rational control, as it seemed to abolish reason entirely in favour of a radical individualism, or to appropriate it for its own conspiratorial ends in a sinister worship of science, as exemplified in the chemist figures noted earlier and in the philosophical hyper-rationality it represents in Chesterton. It could also not be reduced to manageable proportions by criminology, however, for the simpler reason that it appeared in an entirely different class of danger. Anarchism was more than an economic crime with political significance, more, even, than a political crime; instead, anarchist stereotypes constructed its doctrines, as well as its apparently systematic nature, as threats to the very institution of society, and therefore to politics as such. It was an attack on the very standards by which criminality

was judged, since without society there could be no crime. The devastation of London by anarchist barbarians, the deadly levelling of all social hierarchy, the revolt of the masses under demonic leaders against God and good government: these fearsome images affirmed anarchism not as a mere infraction of the law but as a phenomenon existing beyond the refinements of late nineteenth-century criminology, the end of everything, the crime to end all crimes.

Not all writing about anarchism at the end of the nineteenth century transmitted the elements of anarchist typology as unreflectingly as the examples we have seen. Contending with the constructions of the newspapers, of political commentators like Halstead and Hunter, or of novelists like Fawcett and Jenkins were works that were critical of the ideological presuppositions that determined many of the cultural representations of anarchism. Such criticisms did not necessarily require anarchist affiliations. Arthur Conan Doyle, for example, attacked cultural fears of anarchism and socialism in the first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet* (1886), by having Holmes determine that the word *RACHE*, German for *revenge*, written in blood above a dead body, is "simply a blind intended to put the police on the wrong track, by suggesting Socialism and secret societies" (36). In a short story,

published in 1883, entitled "An Exciting Christmas Eve: or, My Lecture on Dynamite," similarly, Doyle focused on the anti-German sentiment that informed much British anti-anarchist prejudice. Dr Otto von Spee, the narrator of this story, is an expert on explosives who is associated with certain traits 'typical' of his national origin; "I am a German and therefore somewhat long-winded perhaps," he remarks at the beginning of his tale (116). Through von Spee's typicality, however, the story implicitly criticizes the belief in Germany as the principal source of anarchism. Kidnapped by "a murderous secret organization," (123) the nationalities of which "seemed almost as varied as their occupations" (122) and to whom he is expected to teach the manufacture of explosives, the indignant von Spee exclaims:

> I ... the modest man of science, was ... teaching them to forge the weapons with which they were to attack society and everything which should be treasured and revered ... Should I, then, put it in their power to convert a house into an arsenal, to destroy the stability of the Fatherland, and even perhaps attempt the life of my beloved Kaiser? Never! (123)

Accordingly he makes his escape through a window as an anarchist bullet ignites the experiment he has been demonstrating, destroying the rest of those present. As an exemplary German type -- bourgeois, clinical, dottily professorial and worshipping the Kaiser unquestioningly --

von Spee presents an alternative to the figure of the German as a bomb wielding terrorist. To the extent that its protagonist exemplifies a sense of national responsibility that must be on its guard against international conspiracy, however, "An Exciting Christmas Eve" does not entirely escape participating in the standard stereotypes; while it rejects the specific xenophobia characteristic of anarchist typology Doyle's narrative retains the element of conspiracy usually associated with the movement.

Other works, displaying greater degrees of anarchist partisanship, do go so far as to subvert this most tenacious of associations. One of these was *A Girl Among the Anarchists* (1903), a novel by Isabel Meredith, the pseudonym of Olivia Rossetti, who, with her sister and brother, published the anarchist journal *The Torch: A Revolutionary Journal of Anarchist Communism* (1894-1896).[9] They produced the journal from the house of their father, William Michael Rossetti, until he forced them to relocate their press off the Tottenham Court Road (Ford 111-12). The printing of *The Torch* in this second setting is fictionalized in *A Girl*, where the journal becomes *The Tocsin*. The novel takes the form of a fictional memoir, structured loosely along the lines of a *bildungsroman*. As Graham Holderness notes, "The book's design enacts a trajectory of disillusionment" (141) with anarchism that is comparable, as we shall see later, to the disaffection experienced by Hyacinth Robinson in *The*

Princess Casamassima. Unlike in James, however, Isabel's ultimate abandonment of anarchism is motivated not by a rejection of what the movement stands for, but by her dissatisfaction at the ineffectiveness of its "lukewarm" (88) British wing; "The Anarchist and revolutionary party," she declares, "has always been more serious on the Continent than in England, and what genuine Anarchists there are here are mostly foreigners" (132). Her personal renunciation of anarchism, therefore, is not a complete repudiation of anarchist principles, just as her enthusiasm for the movement over the course of the novel, though she acknowledges it as part of a youthful phase, (56) is tempered by a critical consciousness.

A Girl subverts many of the elements of anarchist typology seen earlier. It scoffs, for example, at the notion of conspiracy, insisting that

> Never, indeed, did police or press make a greater blunder than when they attributed deeds of violence to associations and large conspiracies ... every one of those outrages and assassinations which startled Europe was the act of a single man, unaided by and frequently unknown to other Anarchists. (212)

Fears of anarchist violence, similarly, are parodied in the character of White, a landlord who reneges on his offer to accommodate *The Tocsin* when he discovers its radical affiliations. At an anarchist's suggestion that "he is

afraid we might waste some dynamite on him," White "seized a bell-pull and rang it violently, and we could not help laughing ... at his evident terror" (97). The tendency to identify anarchism as a form of crime is likewise mocked in the reaction of the anarchists to a phrenologist: "... nothing afforded the comrades more satisfaction," Isabel notes, "than to be informed that their bumps showed undoubted criminal propensities" (153). Such attacks on the contents of public prejudice are extended to the institutions by which anarchist types are perpetuated. The "heavy-witted, pudding-eating police," as a French anarchist calls them, (173) are tricked into allowing a suspected dynamitard to escape their surveillance, and forced "amidst the ironic cheers of their enemies" to make "their shamefaced exit from the scene" (186). In his preface to the novel, Morley Roberts remarks wryly that

> I am perfectly aware that the next time a wild-eyed philosopher, who ought to be under restraint in an asylum, throws a bomb, all the newspapers in Europe will advocate measures for turning all the meeker Anarchists into outrage-mongers. (vii)

A Girl goes even further than its preface on the question of violence, providing a lengthy justification of what it acknowledges as fanaticism. Insisting that the different "standpoint[s]" of the "normal man" and the "fanatic" make it impossible for them to ever understand each other (187),

it declares propaganda-by-the-deed to be the outcome either "of personal sufferings and wrongs endured by the rebel himself" or "the offspring of ideas, the logical result of speculation upon the social evil and the causes thereof" (188). The novel places Emile Henry in the latter category, citing his defence when on trial as "a masterpiece of logical deduction and eloquent reasoning," and claiming that in bombing the Café Terminus Henry "was performing his duty according to his own lights" (189). The serious consideration given to anarchist ideas in *A Girl*, manifested in lengthy discussions of anarchist philosophy, differs markedly from the tendency of other sources to summarily discount such doctrines; it is given all the more depth, furthermore, by Isabel's developing attitude to these ideas. Her initial youthful enthusiasm gives way at the end of the novel to the view that the pursuit of anarchist belief requires a moral purity or heroism unavailable to the majority of people.

Isabel's fascination as a child with the "heroisms and audacities" of the French Revolution (7) conditions her later positive response to foreign revolutionaries. The Russian Nihilist Nekrovitch is "essentially a great man" (23) at whose house gather anarchists who "were mostly foreigners, of the shaggy though not unwashed persuasion" (24). In a chapter ironically entitled "A Foreign Invasion," Isabel describes a group of French anarchists not

as vengeful firebrands, but as high-spirited rogues. Their arrival causes

> a considerable revolution in [*The Tocsin*'s office], which during several weeks rang with Parisian argot and Parisian fun. Many of these Frenchmen were a queer lot. They seemed the very reincarnation of Murger's Bohemians, and evidently took all the discomforts and privations of their situation as a first-class joke. (105)

Italian anarchists[10], likewise, are romanticized as passionately convivial, "warm exponents of the doctrine of free-love," (111) the character of Giannoli being "a man of romantic tastes and inclinations, governed by sentiment rather than by reason; a lover of adventure who found in Anarchism an outlet for his activities" (110). Such descriptions clearly participate in national stereotyping of one sort. At the same time they represent a positive recuperation of the type of the Mediterranean anarchist as dangerously passionate. Isabel's personal acquaintance with foreign anarchists, moreover, allows their personalities to be developed beyond that simply of stock characters.

Isabel's measured enthusiasms do not prevent her from acknowledging the negative aspects of the movement. In the character of Short she recognises the tendency of anarchism to attract "loafers," (47) "the two dominant characteristics which had made of [whom] Socialist[s being] envy and sloth"

(134). In a group of Spanish anarchists recently arrived from Europe, one of whom has stolen from the family firm and driven his brother to suicide, similarly, she sees the possibilities for anarchist doctrine to be perverted towards purely selfish ends, and remarks, accordingly, on the presence among the comrades of

> a considerable smattering of the really criminal classes who seemed to find in the Anarchist doctrine of "Fais ce que veux" that salve to their conscience for which even the worst scoundrels seem to crave, and which, at worst, permitted them to justify their existence in their own eyes as being the "rotten products of decayed society." (274)

Despite her early belief that anarchism provides an escape from the eccentricities of mainstream socialism, Isabel comes to recognize the presence in the movement of "a whole host of cranks who, without being Anarchists in any real sense ... not infrequently brought [the movement] into ridicule" (273). Her own pro-violence stance determines the inclusion in this category of characters who correspond to the milk-and-water stereotype noted earlier; these include Norberry, a "pale, anxious-looking" Christian anarchist (191) characterised by a Tolstoyan passive resistance. Anarchism, furthermore, has a tendency to *produce* cranks out of previously non-eccentric personalities. Isabel is thus appalled by the transformation of Dr Armitage from a serious

physician to a vegetarian who wears "sandals of a peculiar make" (246) and abandons his house as a symbol of bourgeois privilege.

Rossetti thus deploys elements of anarchist typology selectively to rationalize factional disputes within the movement. Moreover, an ideological inconsistency within Isabel's own position reveals itself in her attitude to the English lower classes, among whom the office of *The Tocsin* is located. Isabel goes far in answering to the stereotype of the slumming bourgeois or aristocratic anarchist, most visibly in her acceptance by the anarchist Kosinski, who is initially sceptical of her commitment to the cause. Despite this commitment, however, we find her describing a pub scene as follows:

> Every phase of the lower order of British drinker and drunkard was represented here. The coarse oaths of the men, mingled with the shriller voices of their female companions, and the eternal "'e saids" and "she saids" of the latter's complaints and disputes were interrupted by the plaintive wailing of the puny, gin-nourished infants at their breasts. (42)

The lower classes, who have "apparently no other vocation in life than the consumption of fermented liquor" cannot, as Isabel wryly notes, "be calculated to increase one's democratic aspirations" (42). She disdains the "hateful cockney twang" (81) and finds in Mrs Wattles, *The Tocsin*'s

landlady, the epitome of lower class boorishness and stupidity. The marginalization of the lower classes that occurs through their relegation to the status of being hopelessly uneducatable, persists throughout the novel up until its final tableau, in which Mrs Wattles, "a quivering shapeless mass of gin-drenched humanity ... collapsed on to the doorstep" (301), thereby underscoring the ineffectiveness of English anarchism. Isabel's sympathies for anarchism thus reveal bourgeois prejudices, and an idealization of the movement in its foreign, aristocratic dimension. Balanced against *A Girl*'s critical analysis of English anarchism is a romantic strain that is appalled by the vulgarity of the classes with which its anarchist affiliations require it to consort.

A less divided, because more purely romantic, account of late nineteenth-century anarchism is Frank Harris's historical novel *The Bomb* (1908). Here, in contrast to *A Girl*, it is the working classes that are idealized in opposition to the governmental and commercial institutions by which they are oppressed. *The Bomb* is a fictionalization of the Haymarket bombing, in which eight policemen were killed by an explosion that occurred during a Chicago labour demonstration in 1886. Four anarchists were hanged for the crime, while another, Louis Lingg, committed suicide in prison. Described somewhat immodestly by Harris in a letter to Arnold Bennett as "the first reasoned defence of anarchy

which has been seen in print," (quoted in Pullar 247) *The Bomb* is nevertheless unusual in mainstream fiction for the sympathy it evokes for its narrator, Rudolph Schnaubelt, who identifies himself on the first page of the book as the real thrower of the bomb, now on his deathbed in Europe". It thus partially takes the form of a confession, made for the vindication not of Schnaubelt but of Lingg, whom Schnaubelt regards as an anarchist paragon, "the man who spread terror through America, the greatest man that ever lived, I think; a born rebel, murderer and martyr" (2).

Schnaubelt's ideological position within anarchism is identical to that of his mentor, though it derives from his personal experience of oppression. Arriving from Germany he is barred by systematic prejudice from employment in all but the most exploitative or dangerous jobs. This experience "fermented in me into bitterness which bred all-hating thoughts. When I saw rich men entering a restaurant, or driving in Central Park, I grew murderous" (17). Through the influence of Lingg, whom he meets in Chicago, Schnaubelt is led to a belief in the nobility of labour and the legitimacy of the trade unions as both a solution to worker oppression and the model for future social organization. Radical individualism is rejected as the very basis of the capitalism under which the workers suffer, just as socialism is repudiated as the tyranny of the state. Instead, Lingg and Schnaubelt assert a compromise position in which

> the individual should be left with all those departments of industry which he is able to control ... but all those departments of labour which he is not able to control ... should be taken over by the State, or by the Municipality, beginning, of course, with those which are most necessary to the welfare of the body politic. (103)

Like Rossetti, Harris gives lengthy and serious consideration to discussions of anarchist ideas (though in their preservation of the State these ideas, despite Schnaubelt's claim to the contrary, tend toward socialism). The intensity of the disputes between capital and labour, moreover, produce a greater emphasis in the novel on the necessity of revolt and on recognizing the complicity of the police and newspapers in worker oppression. "One can't meet bludgeons with words," Lingg insists: "Violence must be met with violence" (97). On the part of the state this violence takes the form of brutal police raids on peaceful labour demonstrations, the final instance of which culminates in Schnaubelt's throwing of the bomb. Violence against unions is explicitly condoned by the newspapers, which, "When they were not bragging and attributing the highest virtues to themselves ... were running down foreigners and foreign workmen as if we had been of a lower race" (147). Schnaubelt experiences this anti-labour prejudice at first hand when he is ordered by his editor to "cut out all that

'socialist poppycock'" from the articles he submits (77). The instrumental role of the press in perpetrating anarchist stereotypes that stoke public fears is shown in the coverage of the imprisoned anarchists following Lingg's suicide:

> These anarchists were fanatics -- murderers and madmen -- and must be watched like wild beasts, and killed like wild beasts. The press was unanimous. Fear dictated the words that rage penned (296) ... One report had it that there were twenty thousand armed and desperate anarchists in Chicago who had planned an assault upon the jail ... the dread of some catastrophe was not only in the air, but in men's talk, in their faces. (307)[12]

The Bomb's pro-anarchist position extends to its response to the British scene in both its critique of police and press, and its construction of English socialism. Preempting the harsh reaction of British readers to the treatment of the Chicago anarchists, the novel's preface declares "the administration of justice in the United States [to be] at least as fair and certainly more human than it is in England" (xxii). The British press, similarly, is condemned for "merely copying the ... sensational adjectives of the Western reporters," (252) while British socialism is treated with a gentle condescension as an inadequate response to "the most stubborn upholder of the established fact in the whole world ... the remains of a feudal

aristocracy [that] petrify extravagant inequalities of possession and privilege" (256). Thus the British socialist H.H. Champion "talked a wild communism which he did not understand;" H.M. Hyndman is "a stout, prosperous-looking ... gentleman, who had read a good deal, and who spoke excellently, though he had not, perhaps, got hold of the heart of the matter;" and William Morris, though, "a charming, unaffected personality," has "ideals ... rather mediaeval than modern" (254-55).[13] Like Rossetti, then, Harris deploys stereotypes -- here, a suggestion of theoretical ineptitude -- to justify his anarchism against the reform advocated by the parliamentary socialists. His privileging of anarchism, similarly, is conditioned by romanticism, though this differs from the implicit idealization of European aristocracy found in Rossetti. In *The Bomb* it is instead the immigrant European worker who is romanticized to the extent that, as Holderness notes, the novel is "drawn towards the more mystical and quasi-religious dimension of anarchist thought" (147). Thus an incident in which a drugstore is looted, adduced by Schnaubelt to "show that the workmen were not always in the right," (192) is overshadowed by the overwhelming descriptions of police attacks on strikers. Lingg is a heroic leader of the people, who declares that "Men do not kill themselves for greed or hate; but for love, and an ideal," (314) and whose suicide is an anarchist martyrdom.

Rossetti's and Harris's novels indicate that the image of anarchism and anarchists documented earlier in this chapter did not exert a total hegemony over the cultural imagination. Their engagement with the philosophical content of anarchist doctrine, furthermore, contrasts markedly with representations of the movement in most newspaper, popular fiction and literary texts of the period, which tended to reject any possibility of value in anarchist politics in favour of constructing those politics in accordance with their own ideological concerns. While they presented alternate representations to those espoused by most writing of the period, however, the cultural impact of these novels did not compare with that of most popular fiction about anarchism and other forms of terrorism with which anarchism was often conflated. This was partly because they were aimed at a readership already sympathetic to anarchist radicalism, a proportion of the population that remained at best small. It had also to do with the fact that this and other pro-anarchist writing could not compete with the large variety of work that reinforced anarchist stereotypes. Anarchist journals, even those with relative longevity like *Commonweal* and *Freedom*, could not hope to reach the same readership as the daily newspapers. By the 1880s, following the removal in 1861 of the last of the "taxes on knowledge" that had made newspapers unaffordable to most lower and middle class readers, the circulation of

the metropolitan and provincial dailies had exploded: *The Times* was at 60,000, the *Daily Telegraph* at over 300,000, the *Daily Chronicle* at just under 100,000 (Lee 120). For British anarchists, furthermore, the task of propagandizing lower classes against middle and upper class interests had been made increasingly difficult by the fact that by the 1890s the dailies had begun to circulate widely among workers (Altick 355). Even anarchist incursions into the mainstream of publication, like the serialization of *Mutual Aid* in *Nineteenth Century* magazine, a journal of small circulation aimed at a middle-class readership (359) could not be expected to go far in informing the majority of the public about anarchist positions. It was against an imposing background of anarchist stereotypes that constructed the movement as both threatening and ridiculous that the novels dealt with in the following chapters appeared.

Endnotes

[1]The following account of British anarchism is indebted in factual terms to a number of sources, in particular Woodcock, Marshall and Quail.

[2]For Morris's relationship to anarchism see note 12; see also Woodcock *Anarchism* 373-75 and Quail 171-75.

[3]Callaghan notes in this respect that "The British political system was by any contemporary standards congenial to reformist politics," (28) as the absence of anti-socialist legislation indicates. Parliamentary reform, furthermore, had a long tradition in Chartist and Owenite agitation. In addition, certain aspects of the British political system can be seen as inhibiting radical politicization of the working classes. These included Parliament, which, as Callaghan writes, encouraged popular belief in its universal fairness, and the monarchy, which was "perceived as standing above politics altogether as the representative of the nation and acting as a guarantor that the legislature would remain impartial between the classes" (28). As Ross McKibbin argues,

> the ideological predominance of crown, parliament, and nationality inhibited the evolution of the idea of an alternative social system while a

> libertarian pattern of industrial relations obstructed that sense of fear and resentment which was so characteristic of workers' attitudes on the continent. (324)

[4]This is, of course, the incident upon which *The Secret Agent* is based. The mystery surrounding the Greenwich Park explosion concerns the question of whether Bourdin had intended to blow up the Observatory, or whether he had accidentally detonated the bomb he was carrying while taking a short cut across the park. For an account of the explosion and the various conjectures surrounding it, see Norman Sherry's *Conrad's Western World*.

[5]Bakunin inspired several literary characters, including the protagonist of Turgenev's novel, *Rudin*, and, according to Shaw, Wagner's Siegfried (*Perfect* 274). As Eloise Knapp Hay suggests, he is a possible model -- especially with respect to his dramatic escape from exile in Siberia -- for Peter Ivanovitch in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* (283).

[6]A further example of Bakunin's conspiratorial fantasies is worth noting here, if only for its humorous value. Upon meeting Bakunin in Geneva in 1869, Sergei Nechaev persuaded him that he controlled a conspiratorial

network extending throughout Russia. Bakunin responded to this claim by extending to Nechaev membership in his own imaginary organization. The membership card he provided was embossed with a double axe insignia and bore the seal of "The European Revolutionary Alliance;" it identified Nechaev as agent number 2771 of "The World Revolutionary Alliance" (Pomper 95).

[7]These groups included other socialists, who were presumably in the know about anarchist activities, including Marx himself, who in a letter to Bolte (23 November 1871) accused Bakunin of running a secretive "International within the International" (*Selected* 316). As a moderate socialist who believes in "Not revolution, but evolution," (5) *Hartmann*'s Stanley is similarly privy to anarchist goings on, a position that lends credibility to his determination to "weigh each event [of his story] impartially in the balance" (1).

[8]Nechaev inspired the character of Peter Verkhovensky in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* (1871), as well as being a character in J.M. Coetzee's recent novel *The Master of Petersburg* (1994).

Opinions range on the authorship of *Principles of Revolution* and the *Revolutionary Catechism*. Bakunin's biographer, E.H. Carr, argues for Bakunin's sole authorship

(386), while Aileen Kelly claims that he only edited the pamphlets (269). Based on Bakunin's later repudiation of the views expressed in the *Catechism*, Paul Avrich argues that the pamphlet's authorship "must now be attributed primarily to Nechaev, although it is by no means certain that Bakunin had no role in its composition or revision" (*Anarchist* 40)

[9]The existence of *The Torch* testifies to the precocity of Helen, Arthur and Olivia Rossetti, who were twelve, fourteen and sixteen respectively when it was started. Juliet Heuffer remarks on the surprise their ages occasioned when the journal was distributed in Hyde Park:

> ... whenever anybody bought a copy they would first stand for some time staring at the cover, and as soon as they got to the title of the first article they would ... turn around suddenly and stare at us. (quoted in Weintraub 257)

Despite their ages, however, the Rossettis solicited succesfully articles from important anarchist and non-anarchist figures, including Louis Michel, Sebastian Faure, Malatesta, Octave Mirbeau and Zola. For information on *The Torch*, see Woodcock *Anarchism* 377-78 and Sherry 210-18. Ford Madox Ford mentions it in his memoir *Return to Yesterday* (111-13).

[10]Rossetti's attitude may have been coloured by her family's origins and by her marriage to an Italian anarchist, Antonio Agresti in 1897.

[11]For an historical account of this event, see Paul Avrich's *The Haymarket Tragedy*. Avrich eliminates the real Schnaubelt as the bomb thrower, who, unlike Harris's character, late became a prosperous machinery and farm equipment manufacturer in Argentina (440-41).

[12]Lombroso acknowledges the existence of such fears when he remarks that "... the project of the anarchist of Chicago (if it is true) to blow up a part of the city with bombs attests an absence of the moral sense" (341).

[13]Champion was a member of Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, and espoused that organization's doctrinaire Marxism, as well as a belief in "socialism from above" (Callaghan 22). Morris, however, rejected parliamentary reform and Fabian state socialism as perpetuating the evils of capitalism. Morris is not quite an anarchist, as Woodcock points out, because of his belief in the necessity of law, deriving from tradition and public opinion (373). In *News from Nowhere*, (1891) he rejects the power of public opinion which for Kropotkin would be the principal mechanism of social regulation in a lawless society. Despite his

contention that "Anarchism was impossible," ("How" 656) however, and the fact that he was ousted from the editorship of the *Commonweal* by the anarchist faction of the Socialist League, the organic society described in *News from Nowhere* is similar to that imagined by anarcho-communism, especially to the extent that "as to politics ... we have none" (85). Schnaubelt's rejection of Morris's position as quaintly anachronistic underscores his belief in the practical necessity of the state, and places him closer to Fabianism than to anarchism.

Chapter Two

"Democracy wouldn't care for perfect bindings": Anarchy and Culture in *The Princess Casamassima*

Again and again I have said how the refinement of an aristocracy may be precious and educative to a raw nation as a kind of shadow of true refinement; how its serenity and dignified freedom from petty cares may serve as a useful foil to set off the vulgarity and hideousness of that type of life which a hard middle class tends to establish, and to help people to see this vulgarity and hideousness in their true colours ... But ... the peculiar serenity of aristocracies of Teutonic origin, appears to come from their never having had any ideas to trouble them. And so, in a time of expansion like the present, a time for ideas, one gets, perhaps, in regarding an aristocracy, even more than the idea of serenity, the idea of futility and sterility.

Culture and Anarchy (83-84)

Her Memoirs I read years ago: they are full of the period and the *moeurs* -- also of the lubricity that

> M[atthew] A[rnold] deplores ... And, after all, Zola *is* lubric.
>
> Henry James, letter to Thomas Sergeant Perry (3:14)

The protagonist of Catherine Schine's recent novel *Rameau's Niece* (1993), set in Czechoslovakia during the Velvet Revolution, meets "Anna, an authentically revolutionary student, carrying in the pocket of her black leather jacket a Penguin edition of *The Princess Casamassima*" (116). The allusive irony of this passage, obvious to any reader familiar with James's novel, stems from Anna's aesthetic hopes for the revolution: she listens to "crude Euro-rock" (116) yet cannot understand why capitalism, instead of restoring "beautiful" old buildings, would "rather tear [them] down and build new ugly ones" (114). For Anna, unlike for James, art and popular expression are not mutually incompatible, but can coexist. In fact Anna goes further, since for her popular expression can itself be art: her snapshots of Paris show not "the Eiffel Tower, the Tuileries, the Seine," but "Jim Morrison's grave," and some "graffiti we liked very much" (114).

Anna, of course, stands in stark contrast to Hyacinth Robinson, the inauthentically revolutionary bookbinder of James's *The Princess Casamassima*, who is trapped between the political extremes that Anna reconciles and between which

James's novel operates: 'art,' on the one hand, the social basis for which is the aristocracy and the entire class hierarchy upon which the aristocracy rests, and democracy on the other, the most extreme form of which is represented by the sinister anarchist Diedrich Hoffendahl who threatens a revolution far from velvet. Hyacinth's suicide, as all the critics note, is the result of the intolerable conflict between the pledge he makes to Hoffendahl early in the novel to perform an act of anti-aristocratic terror, and the commitment to art and aristocracy at which he arrives through his acquaintance with the Princess and his eye-opening trip to Europe. As he explains to her in a letter written from Venice:

> The monuments and treasures of art, the great palaces and properties, the conquests of learning and taste, the general fabric of civilization as we know it, based, if you will, upon all the despotisms, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies and the rapacities of the past, but thanks to which, all the same, the world is less of a "bloody sell" and life more of a lark -- our friend Hoffendahl seems to me to hold them too cheap and to wish to substitute for them something in which I can't somehow believe as I do in things with which the yearnings and the tears of the generations have been mixed. (2:145)

As this passage demonstrates, and as many critics have noted, *The Princess Casamassima* constructs the aristocratic realm of art, in Mark Seltzer's words, as "essentially opposed to and outside the political," (393) the realm of the "vulgar districts" (1:81) where Hyacinth lives and works and of anarchist plots. In the words of Walter Benjamin, James here privileges the "aura" of works of art, the sense of their "uniqueness" that is "inseparable from [their] being imbedded in the fabric of tradition" (223). The awe with which Hyacinth regards the monuments and treasures of Venice suggests Benjamin's description of a "theology of art that opposes itself to the practice of politics that arose in response to, among other things, the rise of socialism" (224).

Given this split between the artistic and the political, it is not surprising to find many critics remarking that for a novel whose protagonist is "a product of the London streets," (1:79) and whose ostensible subject matter is revolutionary politics, *The Princess* is remarkably vague in its depictions of either. In this respect, T.S. Eliot's comment that James "had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it" (151) has been accounted a major flaw. Irving Howe, for example, notes James's inability to engage in revolutionary ideas in the novel as well as the absence of descriptive detail about the anarchists: "Precisely in those sections ... where the novel should be most dense," he

writes, "it is most porous" (147). More recently, Allon White has described it as "a book written in bad faith" that makes no attempt to overcome its author's hostility toward anarchism and lower class subject matter: "Obscurity [here] ... appears as a superficial embellishment, as a willed attempt to suggest a world inimical to James's own and closed off from him" (114).

On the other hand, Lionel Trilling, in his famous introduction to the novel (1948), claims that its "social texture" is "grainy and knotted with practicality and detail" (60). Trilling's insistence that *The Princess* is "a brilliantly precise representation of social actuality" (74) and "a very accurate account of anarchism" suggests a documentary tendency that critics have associated with naturalism. Lyall H. Powers, for example, claims that James had "come close to sharing fully the aesthetic persuasion of the Realist-Naturalist group" when he came to write *The Princess* (41); and most recently Sergio Perosa argues that James "for some time at least, felt at heart, and was in his fictional practice, a full-fledged, *scientific* 'naturalist' in the sense that Zola had given to those terms" (18). After visiting Millbank Prison, the scene of the novel's third chapter, certainly, James wrote to Thomas Sergeant Perry, "You see I am quite the Naturalist" (*Letters* 3:61). While this statement's characteristic irony should caution us against taking it literally, as Charles Anderson notes,

(347) it does raise a problem around which critical opinion has tended to polarize, and which I wish to begin this chapter by addressing; namely, the issue of *The Princess Casamassima*'s relationship to naturalism, a movement whose dedication to the exhaustive recording of social reality it seems in its subject matter to embrace but in its notorious vagueness and obscurity to deny.

The considerable body of criticism that has built up around the question of James's relationship to naturalism has tended to examine this problem on a purely aesthetic or biographical level. On the other side of the issue from the critics I have just mentioned are those who deny the influence of naturalism on James, or who see him as transforming naturalist methods to his own ends. Anderson, for example, supports his claim that "The attempt to prove that Henry James was a Naturalist in his fictional practice has proved unconvincing," (349) by documenting James's theoretical aversion, as indicated in his critical essays and letters, to naturalist techniques. Nicholas Tingle, similarly, contends that James "appears to have simulated the naturalistic approach in order to arrive at formalist conclusions" (61). These approaches, whether they confirm or deny James's status as a naturalist writer, all avoid the political aspect of his relationship to the movement, an aspect important for an awareness of the representation of anarchism in *The Princess*.

In this chapter I will examine the political implications of my argument that the novel's aesthetic resists naturalism and moves toward what David Lodge calls "the veils of allusive diction and intricate syntax" (41) characteristic of James's late style. This development, which leads ultimately to what Mary Cross calls James's final "poetic texts," (13) rejects the "chance and contingency" (195) of politics in favour of an emphasis on style and form. From the perspective of this stylistic imperative, *The Princess* represents anarchism as an extreme instance of historical contingency, the exemplary form of politics as such which it understands through the category of the vulgar. As in Chapter One, I will invoke Bakhtin to explain the novel's relationship to naturalism as an attempt to repress the heteroglossic and carnivalesque elements present in a writer like Zola who to James represents a version of aesthetic anarchy. This repression, which is essentially political, occurs both formally and thematically, though to different degrees in each case. Formally, James's aversion from personal experience of anarchism necessitates his naturalistic reliance on newspapers as sources for his anarchist characters. The admission of the kind of social heteroglossia represented by newspaper stereotypes is, however, muffled by James's characteristic style, and it is only through an awareness of these stereotypes in the broader cultural context that we

can discern his repression of the traces of such documentation. Thematically, the novel's admission of the complicity of the aristocracy in dangerous class mixing indicates its understanding of a failure on the part of British society to repress carnivalesque elements within itself, elements that James identifies in their most extreme forms with anarchism. As I hope to show, this association of anarchism with class mixing and vulgarity aligns *The Princess* with Arnold's critique of society in *Culture and Anarchy*, particularly in its emphasis on the failure of the aristocracy to provide leadership through the vehicle of culture.

To help understand better how James's relationship to naturalist aesthetics determines his construction of anarchism it is necessary to consider his attitude to Zola, a representative naturalist writer whose novel *Germinal* (1885) Leon Edel calls a "remote counterpart" of *The Princess*.[1] The plot of Zola's novel, which focuses on worker agitation at a mine in Northern France, culminates in an outrage, perpetrated by the anarchist Souvarine, that destroys the Le Voreux mine. Souvarine, though marginal to the life of the miners, is, unlike James's Hoffendahl, prominent within the narrative. The contrast between his character and Hoffendahl's, indeed, indicates the extent to which *The Princess* avoids the painstaking attention to detail that, as David Baguley notes, is characteristic of

naturalism ("Essay" 45). Souvarine, for example, is given a highly specific yet representative biography. He is

> the youngest child of a noble family in the province of Tula. While he was a medical student in St. Petersburg, the wave of socialist enthusiasm, which at that time was sweeping all the youth of Russia off its feet, had decided him to learn a manual skill, that of mechanic, so that he might mingle with the people, understand them and help them like a brother. And this was what he lived on now, having fled after an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the emperor: he had lived for a month in a green grocer's cellar, hollowing out a tunnel under the roadway, charging his bombs in constant danger of being blown up with the house. (142)

In his renunciation of aristocratic privilege, his failed assassination attempt and his manufacturing of explosives, Souvarine corresponds to several of the anarchist types described in Chapter One. His Russian origins and anti-Marxist politics, furthermore, suggest him as a Bakunin-like figure who rejects evolutionary socialism in favour of lurid apocalypse: "Yes anarchy," he exclaims, "the end of everything, the whole world bathed in blood and purified by fire" (146). This connection is reinforced by Souvarine's pet rabbit "whom he had christened Poland" (143) and which can be read as an allusion to Bakunin's early nationalist

enthusiasms. There are, moreover, other 'typical' aspects to Zola's anarchist -- the sense of otherworldly fanaticism produced by the description of his watching cigarette smoke "with the rapt gaze of a mystic," (143) and his injunction to "mow people down," (144) that suggests the ruthless pronouncements of the *Revolutionary Catechism*.

The description of Hoffendahl in *The Princess* is marked, in contrast, by its absence of detail. Whereas Souvarine can be read as a composite figure, constructed out of elements of Bakunin, Nechaev and terrorists like Emile Henry, James's anarchist remains vague. As Hyacinth describes his encounter with Hoffendahl to the Princess:

> "... he leaned against the wall straight in front of me, with his hands behind him. He told me certain things, and his manner was extraordinarily quiet" (2:50) ... before their walk was over he had told her more definitely what Hoffendahl demanded. This was simply that he should hold himself ready for the next five years to do at a given moment an act which would in all probability cost him his life. The act was as yet indefinite, but one might get an idea of it from the penalty involved, which would certainly be capital. (2:53)

In addition to the lack of the kind of details present in Zola's description, other factors contribute to the vagueness of this passage. One is the shift from direct to

free indirect speech that occurs at its beginning and is a blurring of Hyacinth's direct reporting of his experience in favour of a hazier account of the gist of his speech. This shift is characteristic of James's treatment of social topics at this time, and can be found also in the description of Verena Tarrant's feminist speech at the beginning of *The Bostonians* (1886). It is also symptomatic of a larger movement towards obscurity that is exemplified by the way in which James gives his reader access to Hoffendahl only retrospectively, through Hyacinth's memory of an event that never occurs, as the rest of *The Princess*'s action does, in the novel's simple past. Hyacinth's meeting with Hoffendahl is an example of what Gerard Genette calls an *internal analepsis;* it recalls an event that occurs before the point in the narrative at which it is related, but *after* the point at which the narrative as a whole begins. Thus Hyacinth takes his revolutionary pledge in a narrative lacuna that avoids the direct narration of events between his nocturnal cab ride with Paul Muniment and Augustus Poupin at the end of Book Second and his stay at Medley in Book Third.

This strategic elision of the figure of Hoffendahl from *The Princess*'s narrative finds echoes in other instances of the novel's aversion to elements of naturalist representation. The focus on base and degrading elements of society (Baguley "Essay" 45) is reduced in *The Princess* to

minor descriptions such as that of Millicent's family in Book First. The explicit accounts of the destitution that characterizes the miners' lives in *Germinal*, is muffled here by a characteristic use of irony.

> Mr Henning was supposed to fill a place of confidence in a brush-factory, while his wife, at home, occupied herself with the washing and mending of a considerable brood, mainly of sons. But economy and sobriety ... had never presided at their councils ... The freedom and frequency of Mrs Henning's relations with a stove-polisher in the Euston Road were ... not a secret ... The little Hennings, unwashed and unchidden, spent most of their time either in pushing each other into the gutter or in running to the public-house at the corner for a pennyworth of gin ... (1:63)

The story of the Henning family represents also a rejection of the naturalist focus on heredity and degeneration. "Determinism is everything" remarks Zola in his preface to the first novel of the Rougon-Macquart series, *La Fortune des Rougon* (1871), in which he describes his work as a species of "scientific physiology;" ("On" 172) the focus on the hereditary component of his characters' makeup, moreover, emphasizes the taints carried in the blood that predetermine their decline. Millicent, however, survives her family's downward spiral, appearing to the astonished Pinnie as an example of upwardly mobile "vice"

(1:65). A more crucial example of this rejection of heredity in the novel, as Margaret Scanlan observes, is Hyacinth's suicide, which rejects the murderous tendencies of his mother, and also refuses to reenact symbolically the killing of his father that would be represented by the Duke's assassination (388). Where Zola sees the debasement produced by bad heredity as rife among the working classes, indeed among all levels of society, James constructs the Hennings as unusual: "... these scenes, rendering the crash of crockery and the imprecations of the wounded frequently and peculiarly audible, had long been the scandal of a humble but harmonious neighbourhood" (1:63). The existence of this harmony, however, does not imply that *The Princess* shares the often implicit working-class sympathies of naturalism, which are particularly evident in *Germinal*, where the crushing of the tenants of Le Voreux by the mine owners has a tragic dimension. Instead, the novel displays a disdain for the lower orders which, in the following passage, is reminiscent of the pub scene in Rossetti's novel cited in Chapter One:

> There was plenty of palaver at the "Sun and Moon"; there were nights when a blast of imbecility seemed to blow over the place and one felt ashamed to be associated with so much crude fatuity and flat-face vanity. Then every one, with two or three exceptions, made an ass of himself, thumping the table and

> repeating over some inane phrase which appeared for the hour to constitute the whole furniture of his mind. (1:338)

We can see this rejection of naturalist technique in *The Princess* symbolized by the disappearance of the briefly introduced Henning family from the novel, never to be seen again: "neither spar nor splinter floated back to their former haunts, and they were engulfed altogether in the fathomless deeps of the town" (1:64). Into these deeps the narrative of *The Princess* rarely strays, and never in great detail, even at the end of the novel when Hyacinth accompanies the Princess on her philanthropic forays into the slums. We can also see it in the notable absence from Lady Aurora's library of "certain members of an intensely modern school, advanced and consistent realists" (1:315).[2] Clues to the reasons for this rejection can be found in James's criticism, notably his essay on Zola, published in 1903, where the aesthetic biases of *The Princess* are, I would argue, made explicit. Here James writes that

> It was the fortune, it was in a manner the doom, of *Les Rougons-Macquart* to deal with things almost always in gregarious form, to be a picture of *numbers*, of classes, crowds, confusions, movements, industries ... It produces the effect of a mass of imagery in which shades are sacrificed, the effect of character and passion in the lump or by the ton. The fullest, the

> most characteristic episodes affect us like a sounding chorus or procession, as with a hubbub of voices and a multitudinous tread of feet. (245-46)

Rather than rendering, like James, the details of individual consciousness, naturalism here is viewed as the representation of massive and large scale external details. In this account, moreover, we can see an aversion to the portrayal of character through the material categories of class and labour (or "industries"), an aversion that is confirmed by James's surprise at Zola's ability to portray "the shallow and simple," the "democratic, malodorous Common" in "strange and interesting" ways (260). This distaste for the rendering of lower class experience has an aesthetic analogue in James's response to the techniques by which that experience is rendered; if the work's subject matter is distasteful, the terms by which it conveys that subject matter -- the cataloguing of the material details of class life, especially lower class life -- is itself felt, like Zola's personality which pervades his work, to be like the "presence of the cargo" of a ship that "makes itself felt for the assaulted senses" (242). Responding to a naturalist text, then, the Jamesian reader recoils before the shock of the material and economic world suggested by the term "cargo," a world that is chaotic and multitudinous in its form. Reality for Zola, in James's assessment, is in fact a kind of anarchic substance, characterized by an

immense proliferation of details, and also by its focus on large groups whose "multitudinous tread of feet" sounds throughout *Les Rougon-Macquart*. *The Princess*'s attitude to such human numbers can be judged from its description of "The London mob -- the most horrible, the most brutal," (1:278) that is for the most part effaced from the narrative.

An enactment of precisely the kind of reader's reaction that I have just described can be found in James's account of the genesis of *The Princess* in the novel's Preface:

> ... the assault directly made by the great city upon an imagination quick to react, fully explains a large part of it ... the prime idea was unmistakably the ripe round fruit of perambulation ... to a mind curious, before the human scene, of meanings and revelations the great grey Babylon easily becomes, on its face, a garden breathing with an immense illustrative flora. Possible stories, presentable figures, rise from the thick jungle as the observer moves, fluttering up like startled game, and before he knows it indeed he has fairly to guard himself against the brush of importunate wings. (1:v)

As in the Zola essay, the perceptive imagination here is assaulted by the atmosphere of the streets, the realm of "the common air" (1:v). James's experience is of an urban jungle proliferating with "numerous" elements of artistic

possibility that threaten to overwhelm the observer; he must guard himself, accordingly, against the "dense categories of dark arcana," (1:vii) the "swarming facts" (1:vi) that characterize "the human scene," and the "vast vague murmur" (1:vi) of "the great grey Babylon," (1:v) terms suggestive of naturalist description.

In the Preface to *The Princess* James defines his own aesthetic ideology against that of naturalism through this story of his fending off such naturalist documentary clutter. The identification of naturalism as a kind of aesthetic anarchy is confirmed by Hyacinth's meeting with Hoffendahl, in which he describes the anarchist as a demonic artist who

> had exactly the same mastery of [his revolutionary plots] that a great musician ... had of the keyboard of the piano; he treated all things, persons, institutions, ideas, as so many notes in his great symphonic massacre. (2:55)

His consummate skill in this respect is emphasized by his being described as "genius" and "the Master," a term associated by James elsewhere, for example in "The Lesson of the Master," with writing. His revolutionary art is described in terms reminiscent of the naturalist practice of note-taking, assembling details of human life in order to classify them for the purposes of performing a 'scientific' anatomy of society; it is reminiscent, too, of James's

descriptions of Zola's design for *Les Rougon-Macquart*, one that is "nothing if not architectural ... a 'majestic whole', a great balanced façade, with all its orders and parts" ("Zola" 245):

> Humanity, in his scheme, was classified and subdivided with a ... thoroughness and altogether of course from the point of view of the revolution -- as it might forward or obstruct that cause ... he had in his hand innumerable ... threads. Hyacinth knew nothing of these and didn't much want to know, except for the portentous wonder of the way Hoffendahl kept them apart. (2:55)

As Mark Seltzer observes, "Hoffendahl's God-like power is also the power of the omniscient narrator, a power of unlimited overseeing" (54); he is the leader of anarchists who

> know everything -- everything. They're like the great God of the believers: they're searchers of hearts; and not only of hearts, but of all man's life -- his days, his nights, his spoken, his unspoken words. (2:383)[3]

His is an artistry, furthermore, that James implicitly differentiates himself from in the Preface when, in describing the "perambulation[s]" (33) from which *The Princess* grew he says that: "To haunt the great city and by this habit to penetrate it, imaginatively, in as many places

as possible -- *that* was to pull wires, *that* was to open doors" (1:xxii).

Hoffendahl can be read as an image of the naturalist writer, whose techniques are implicitly disavowed in the Preface, but who remains as an absent presence at the centre of the novel; he is the symbol of naturalism with which *The Princess* flirts but never engages. His status as an anarchist confirms the point made earlier about James's understanding of naturalism as kind of aesthetic anarchy, especially in light of his understanding of it as the revolt of the "London mob," that would occur, with the "Hubbub of voices and multitudinous tread of feet" characteristic of Zola's novels. Hoffendahl's absence in *The Princess* thus has a double significance. It can be read as symbolizing the effort of the Jamesian aesthetic to remove itself from naturalism's anarchic influence, an influence that nevertheless lurks within it to the extent that the novel is about working class experience and revolutionary politics; it is also a crucial effect of that rejection of naturalism, a demonstration of James's unwillingness to report the "occult" (1:xxii) details of anarchist organization -- the novel's most striking example of obscuration and indirection.

Is there a way that we might more accurately characterize James's rebuff of naturalism in *The Princess*, that might allow us to see more clearly the coextension of

its aesthetic and political ideologies, and thus help us to understand its representation of anarchism? One way of doing so might be to view the aesthetic of the novel from the point of view of the centre of consciousness technique proposed by James as an alternative to classical omniscient realism. As he describes it in the Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, this technique consists, in Genette's terms, of narrative focalization through the perspective of a central character, in this case Hyacinth to whose "individual notation" (1:xiv) of events the novel's narrative is for the most part limited. By itself, however, this restriction does not account for the absence of sociological or technical detail in the narrative, since Hyacinth is not limited in his access to both kinds of experience: he is witness to multiple levels of the social scale -- the anarchist underworld, his own working class experience, the aristocratic realm of the princess -- and is himself an artisan, employed in the technical trade of bookbinding.

Instead, then, it might be helpful to understand the limitations placed on Hyacinth's experience in terms of an aesthetic alternative to naturalism. James himself encourages such an understanding in the Preface:

> I recall pulling no wires, knocking at no closed doors, applying for no "authentic" information; but I recall also on the other hand the practice of never missing an

> opportunity to add a drop, however small, to the bucket of my impressions ... (1:xxii)

Following this cue, Anderson sees *The Princess* as an example of an emerging literary impressionism in James's style (346). Anderson's claim accounts for the subjective effects of the novel's descriptive scenes, in particular its emphasis on the properties of light in Hyacinth's experiences of the street:

> He liked the reflexion of the lamps on the wet pavement, the feeling and smell of the carboniferous London damp; the way the winter fog blurred and suffused the whole place, made it seem bigger and more crowded, produced haloes and dim radiation, trickles and evaporations, on the plates of glass. (1:82)

It still does not account, however, for the analeptic indirection represented by his recollection of his meeting with Hoffendahl. Neither, for that matter, does Tingle's claim that the aesthetic of *The Princess* is formalist rather than naturalist (61).[4] In addition to being itself a more nebulous formulation, this claim does not explain the existence of greater degrees of obscurity at key places in the text, namely those points, like the Hoffendahl episode and the visit to Millbank prison at the beginning of the novel, or to the slums at the end, where naturalist detail seems consciously disavowed.

What these various accounts of James's aesthetic miss, and what, I would argue, does explain such moments of obscuration, is an awareness of the political determinants of *The Princess*'s style. Such an awareness is made possible by a Bakhtinian analysis of the text that sees in the emergence of the Jamesian indirect style an attempt to repress the heteroglossic nature of novelistic discourse. As I will argue here, this repression occurs in the service of a "poetic" style -- according to Bakhtin's understanding of the term -- characteristic of James's later work. It is important to note that the aesthetic of *The Princess* is to a large degree *negative*; that is, the function that many critics see the novel performing in the movement toward James's later style is a formally repressive one that has an essentially political dimension.

In his essay "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin defines the novel as "a diversity of social speech types" or "heterogeneous stylistic unities [which] upon entering the novel combine to form a structured artistic system" (262). The organization of this combined "heteroglossia" in the novel (263) occurs through its different voices being "subordinated to the higher stylistic unity of the work as a whole, a unity that cannot be identified with any single one of the unities subordinated to it" (262). The kinds of social voices organized in this way are numerous; in addition to the various kinds of narrative voices, both

"literary" and colloquial (*skaz*), and the speech of characters, Bakhtin notes two other kinds: "semi-literary (written) everyday narration," such as the letter or diary, and "literary but extra-artistic authorial speech," such as "moral, philosop ical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth" (262). We can expand this latter class to include medical discourse, political pamphlets, and newspapers.

Naturalist discourse furnishes a clear example of the kind of heteroglossia that Bakhtin talks about here. In a novel such as *Germinal* can be found examples of a variety of characters' speech that di..er stylistically as the narrative ranges up and down the social scale. More crucially, the naturalist practice of note taking manifests itself in the subordination to the voice of the narrator of a large variety of what Bakhtin calls extra-artistic social texts. The best example of this is the medical discourse represented by the work of Claude Bernard, since Zola's project for *Les Rougon-Macquart*, as he describes it in "The Experimental Novel", was to produce a large-scale fictional application of Bernard's methods:

> My remarks on [the experimental novel] will only be an adaptation, for the experimental method has been set forth with force and marvellous clarity by Claude Bernard in his *Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* ... Usually it will be sufficient

> for me to replace the word "doctor" by the word "novelist" in order to make my thought clear and to bring to it the rigor of scientific truth. (162)

Examples of the determinism that characterizes Bernard's approach can be found throughout *Germinal*, most notably in the hereditary taint of "accumulated alcohol" in Etienne's blood (478) that causes his murder of Chaval at the end of the novel.

In addition to this implicit presence of medical discourse within the novel, other types of social heteroglossia can be found. These include technical descriptions of the mine works, sociological details of the lives of the miners, accounts of strikes and of revolutionary meetings, and the descriptions of the anarchist Souvarine. Each of these descriptions correspond to different kinds of "extra-artistic" texts: engineering manuals, sociological studies, blue books, newspaper accounts of strikes in northern France and of anarchist activities, revolutionary literature of various types, including labour and anarchist pamphlets, and, as I suggested earlier in the case of Souvarine, the work of Bakunin and the *Revolutionary Catechism*.

James notes this heteroglossic element of naturalism in his essay on Zola when he describes the latter researching his novels by means of "libraries, books, newspapers ... blue-books, reports, interviews" (245-46). In *The Princess*,

however, such heteroglossia is present in a markedly different way. Here, social heteroglossia is muffled, so to speak, by its being subordinated to a greater degree to what Bakhtin calls the "higher stylistic unity" of the work. Thus, examples of sociological knowledge, such as details of working class life, or of anarchism, are assimilated to the will to style that governs the language of the book as a whole. This emphasis on consistent style -- the assertion of a single, monoglossic voice over all others in the narrative -- is most obvious at the key points in the novel when the narrative necessitates description of sociological subjects. Thus in descriptions of the slums, or of anarchist activity, occasions when the reader of a naturalist novel might recognize the heteroglossic incorporation of some kind of social text, we find in *The Princess* only "the darkest places, the most fetid holes" (2:260), hints of scenes "appalling" and "obscene" (2:267) and the indirect portrayal of Hoffendahl noted above. Similarly, the reporting of working class speech in the novel is limited to the description of the "Sun and Moon," where it is mediated through Hyacinth's hostile consciousness and registered merely as 'exemplary' fragments. The only explicit example in the novel of what Bakhtin would call "semi-literary" heteroglossia, is Hyacinth's letter from Venice. This, however, is allowed into the text, I would argue, precisely because as an

instance of heteroglossia it poses no threat to the subordinating aesthetic of the narrative: notable as a kind of manifesto of the novel's own aesthetic and political allegiances, it is ideologically and stylistically consistent, as we will see later, with *The Princess*'s tendency toward monoglossia.

In this respect the arguments of critics like John Carlos Rowe, that *The Princess* represents "James's struggle to overcome Zola" (160), and Margaret Scanlan that in it he "suppresses the novel as genre" (393) can therefore be seen to be of a piece: the repression of Zola is the repression of the novel as genre, that is to say its multi-generic heterogeneity. This repression, which I have described as monoglossic, is the work of what Bakhtin calls a unitary language that establishes itself in opposition to novelistic discourse:

> Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language. A unitary language is not something given but is always in essence posited -- and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. But at the same time it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual

> understanding and crystallizing into a real, although still relative, unity -- the unity of the reigning literary language, "correct language." ("Discourse" 270)

A number of points in this description are consistent with what we have observed thus far about James's use of language in *The Princess*. Monoglossic language is posited over against the 'given' of heteroglossic language in novelistic discourse. This act of linguistic confrontation, furthermore, is seen, crucially, as a historical process, one through which certain historically prevailing standards of literary style are affirmed. In accordance with the metaphor, proposed in my Introduction, of the novel as a kind of polity, therefore, monoglossia can be seen as the attempt on the part of a unitary language to bring the various kinds of speech it dialogizes into line with itself. Thus "the victory of one reigning language ... over the others" constitutes in James "the incorporation of ... lower social strata into a unitary language of culture and truth" ("Discourse" 271). Bakhtin's association of unitary language with poetry, (273) moreover, is consistent with accounts of the 'poetic' quality of James's prose -- though it should be emphasized that the narrow conception of the poetic here does not account for the majority of poetic practice.[5]

Heteroglossia can thus be seen as a kind of generic democracy, the dialogism of multiple voices over which monoglossia attempts to impose a single, official language. The political allegiances of James's novel, its privileging of art over politics can thus be seen to have a formal analogue in its style. In the case of the novel, furthermore, heteroglossia is also historically democratic, since it derives from popular forms. *The Princess* can thus be seen as attempting to repress "the 'baggy monsters' of its family history," (Scanlan 391) a multigeneric, popular history consisting of "Elizabethan joke books, criminal autobiographies, and plagiarized romance stories of its low origins" (382).

In her article "Terrorism and the Realistic Novel," Scanlan reads Hyacinth's rejection of the resurgence of his murderous family history through his refusal to murder the Duke as an allegory for the horror displayed by James toward popular forms, especially the newspaper. In a letter to Edward Cook written in 1886, James condemns "The reading of the newspaper" as "*the* pernicious habit" (*Letters* 3:108), and associates it explicitly with lower class experience in *The Princess* when he describes Hyacinth's reading practices as a boy. The reader encounters Hyacinth for the first time,

> planted in front of the little sweet-shop on the other side of the street, an establishment where periodical

> literature, as well as tough toffy and hard lollipops, was dispensed, and where song-books and pictorial sheets were attractively exhibited in the small-paned, dirty window. He used to stand there for half an hour at a time, spelling out the first page of the romances in the *Family Herald* and the *London Journal*, and admiring the obligatory illustration in which the noble characters (they were always of the highest birth) were presented to the carnal eye. (1:4-5)

The newspaper, here, is a popular consumer commodity, a sort of intellectual candy, that contains formulaic romances, vulgar stories of the social class with which James felt himself to be intimately acquainted.

James's lack of knowledge about anarchism, however, forces him into a position where, as W.H. Tilley argues convincingly in his study of *The Background of* The Princess Casamassima, he must rely heavily on his readings of *The Times* for his composition of the novel. As George Woodcock remarks,

> James shows merely a knowledge of the kind of distorted rumours and journalistic stories by which [anarchists] were represented in the newspapers of the late nineteenth century. ("Henry James" 228)

This knowledge of journalistic constructions of anarchism in the novel would not be available to the ordinary reader. Instead, it is only through the awareness of anarchist

typology available in my first chapter that the extent to which James's poetic style muffles newspaper heteroglossia becomes clear.

The clearest example of the muffled presence of such newspaper stereotypes in *The Princess* is the association of anarchism with the notion of a sinister conspiracy extending beneath the innocent surface of the upper world: "People go and come," remarks Hyacinth, "and buy and sell, and drink and dance and make money and make love, and seem to know nothing and suspect nothing." As he reports his knowledge of this conspiracy to the Princess:

> It's beyond anything I can say. Nothing of it appears above the surface; but there's an immense underworld peopled with a thousand forms of revolutionary passion and devotion. The manner in which it is organised is what astonished me. I knew that, or thought I knew it, in a general way, but the reality was a revelation ... everything's doomed! In silence, in darkness, but under the feet of each one of us, the revolution lives and works. It's a wonderful, immeasurable trap, on the lid of which society performs its antics ... The invisible, impalpable wires are everywhere, passing through everything, attaching themselves to objects in which one would never think of looking for them. (2:49)

The characteristic indirection in this passage -- the fact that it sheds no light on the details of Hyacinth's revelation -- intensifies the effect of concealed threat that characterizes newspaper and popular fictional accounts of conspiracy. Moreover, without describing any details of its organization, James's account of Hyacinth's relationship to Hoffendahl, in whose hands the "invisible, impalpable wires" are gathered, suggests the notion of ironclad, hierarchical obedience found in *Hartmann the Anarchist*: "He had taken a vow of blind obedience, as the Jesuit fathers to the head of their order" (2:54). Hyacinth's role is a minor one, that of a single note in Hoffendahl's "symphonic" organization: his

> little job was a very small part of what Hoffendahl had come to England for; he had in his hand innumerable other threads ... The day would come when Hyacinth far down in the treble, would feel himself touched by the little finger of the composer, would become audible (with a small, sharp crack) for a second. (2:55-56)

He must nevertheless be prepared at any moment to submit to revolutionary discipline: his task "was to be done instantly and absolutely, without a question, a hesitation or a scruple, in the manner that should be prescribed, at the moment, from headquarters" (2:53-54).

The absence of detail that we have noted in the novel's portrayal of Hoffendahl makes specific sources impossible to

determine, despite the attempts of critics to see him as a fictional version of Johann Most, the publisher of *Freiheit* (Trilling 74), and Friedrich August Reinsdorf who had been arrested in 1884 for conspiracy to assassinate the Kaiser, an account of whose trial was published in *The Times* (Tilley 37). Instead, Hoffendahl can be seen as an attenuated version of the stereotype of the anarchist leader that we saw in Chapter One. He is an example of charismatic persuasiveness -- provoking Hyacinth's exclamation "*Pardieu*, I've had a vision! ... He made me see, he made me feel, he made me do, everything he wanted" (2:50) -- combined with a ruthlessness reminiscent of the *Revolutionary Catechism* in his assessment of everything from the point of view of the success of the revolution. He is prepared to sacrifice Hyacinth not for the revolution itself, furthermore, but for its rehearsal.

A similar ruthlessness is distinguishable in Paul Muniment -- like many popular anarchists, a chemist (1:118) -- who is prepared unemotionally to commit his best friend to a fatal act and to exploit the Princess for money. In the same way the character of Schinkel is capable, despite his claim that he "lofe[s]" Hyacinth (2:382), of reflecting coldly in the last sentence of the novel that the revolver with which Hyacinth has killed himself "would certainly have served much better for the Duke" (2:43). Schinkel's exaggerated Germanness, like the "truly Germanic

thoroughness" (2:55) with which Hoffendahl subdivides society, echoes the clinical malevolence ascribed to German anarchists in popular discourse. This stereotyping corresponds to the shift, noted in Chapter One, away from France towards Germany as a source of anarchic threat, a shift that is further confirmed by the novel's portrayal of the French revolutionary August Poupin. The son of an exiled Communard, Poupin is characterised by a comic idealism that recalls another of James's radicals, *The Bostonians*' Miss Birdseye:

> M. Poupin was an aggressive socialist ... and a constructive democrat (instead of being a mere scoffer at effete things) and a theorist and an optimist and a collectivist and a perfectionist and a visionary; he believed that the day was to come when all the nations of the earth would abolish their frontiers and armies and custom-houses, and embrace on both cheeks and cover the globe with boulevards, radiating from Paris, where the human family would sit in groups at little tables, according to affinities, drinking coffee (not tea, *par exemple*!) and listening to the music of the spheres. (1:96)

The novel's sketches of revolutionary types represented by the characters of Hoffendahl, Muniment, Schinkel and Poupin, however, remain cursory by comparison to naturalistic constructions of similar characters, to the

extent that to a reader unaware of the broader cultural context they do not evoke the anarchist types of which they are versions. The conformity of these descriptions to the stylistic imperatives of James's prose, moreover, furnishes examples of the repression of social heteroglossia by the singular style of James's monoglossic language.

At the thematic level, on the other hand, anarchism, in its capacity as primarily a threat to taste, is not easily contained by the novel's affiliation with a refined aesthetic order. A helpful way of understanding this is in terms of the Bakhtinian category of the carnivalesque examined in my Introduction. The introduction of the transgressive practices characteristic of carnival into literature Bakhtin calls the process of "carnivalization" (*Dostoevsky*'s 122). Carnivalization can occur in multiple ways and to varying degrees; although the purest form of such literature is the menippean satire, carnivalization can manifest both "directly and without mediation or indirectly, through a series of intermediate links" (107) in other forms.

The carnivalization of literature has a thematic dimension as well, one which is characterized by a specific subject matter that is represented to a certain extent by naturalism. Describing the carnivalesque nature of naturalism, Bakhtin calls it

> The adventures of truth ... [that] take place on the high road, in brothels, in the dens of thieves, in taverns, marketplaces, prisons ... The idea here fears no slums, is not afraid of any of life's filth. The man of the idea ... collides with worldly evil, depravity, baseness, and vulgarity in their most extreme expression. (115)

The "man of the idea," here is the hero of the carnivalesque narrative whose adventures in the naturalistic "nether world" (116) constitute a hardened testing of his conception of the world; this element of "the dialogic testing of an idea" combined with the simultaneous "testing of the person who represents it" (112) is crucial to carnivalized literature. Etienne in *Germinal* can be seen as undergoing such a testing process when, through his experiences in the mining community which is based around the literal nether world of the pits, he runs the gamut of revolutionary thought.

Beyond this testing of Etienne's revolutionary ideas, *Germinal* dramatizes the testing of the larger idea of hereditary degeneration that informs *Les Rougon-Macquart* as a whole: it performs "moral-psychological experimentation" consisting of the "representation of the unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states of man -- insanity of all sorts" (116). It enacts this testing in an atmosphere that, as was remarked above, 'scandalously' depicts lower class

experience as profanely vulgar. A typical example of this atmosphere of common carnival vu'qarity is the description of the Montsou fair day in Part Three:

> ... mothers, giving up any pretence of delicacy, took out breasts that hung down like long, yellow sacks of oats, and smeared their chubby offspring with milk; whilst the children who could already walk, blown out with beer, crawled on all fours under the tables and shamelessly relieved themselves ... everyone's elbows or knees were sticking into his neighbour and everybody thought it great fun to feel his neighbour's elbow. All mouths were grinning from ear to ear in continuous laughter ... Underneath the paper chains the dancers could no longer see each other for sweat, and this encouraged pit-boys to catch hold of backsides at random and throw haulage girls on their backs ... From the ripe corn there was arising a breath of passion; a good many children must have been made that night. (161-62)

In the laughter (*Dostoevsky's* 127) and communality represented by "free and familiar contact between people" (123) in this scene, we find two basic elements of the carnivalesque. There is, moreover, a fascination with the grotesque body that centres on acts of "eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination ... copulation [and] pregnancy" (*Rabelais* 317).

What is missing from Zola is any sense of the transgressive nature of carnival. The notion of free and familiar contact, of laughter that ridicules and of the grotesque body that is in the act of transgressing its own limits, (317) is linked in the fully carnivalesque to the ritual inversion and eradication of social hierarchy I referred to in Chapter One. In naturalism, however, the governing principle of determinism necessitates that the trajectory of the plot, in accordance with hereditary degeneration, is always downward; what David Baguley calls its "entropic vision" is antithetical to the summoning of a genuinely transgressive energy and culminates only in a return to the status quo. Thus in *Germinal* the carnivalesque represented by the Montsou fair is remarkable for the way in which it is limited to the workers, the familiar contact, laughter and grotesquerie occurring within a single class, and thus confirming that class's isolation and containment within the social scale. This isolation of transgressive potential prevents any threat to the social hierarchy represented by the miners from materializing and leads only to their being crushed both by the refusal of the managers to concede to their strike demands, and (literally) by the destruction of the mine by the anarchist Souvarine. The inward collapse of the mine at the hands of a political radicalism that fails to free the miners can be read as an

image of this collapse of the workers back into their own class.

In James, on the other hand, such transgressive potential *is* present. We can note an element of sensitivity to such potential, for example, in his description of Derby day in "Three Excursions," a piece published in *The Galaxy* magazine in 1877 that nevertheless contrasts significantly with the apprehensive awareness of the carnivalesque found in *The Princess*. His account of this scene differs crucially from the Zola passage cited above in its inclusion of elements of class-mixing. In this respect it is reminiscent of both Edward Jenkins and Arnold, though without the sense of danger contained in their accounts.

Derby day is a popular celebration marked by class mixing that is symbolized, as it is in Jenkins, by the convergence of a "current of heterogeneous vehicles," in the midst of which

> You begin to perceive ... that a sustained high tone of appearance is not the note of the conditions ... that you are "in" for the vulgar on an unsurpassable scale, something blatantly, unimaginably, heroically shocking to timid "taste" ... (*English* 112)

It is a "carnival" (117) -- "There are nigger-minstrels and beggars and mountebanks and spangled persons on stilts and gypsy matrons ... with glowing Oriental eye and dropping their *h*'s" (115) -- that as the "lock of vehicles grew

denser" (117) involves all classes in motley, affirmative vulgarity:

> The people that of all peoples is habitually the most governed by decencies, proprieties, rigidities of conduct, was for one happy day unbuttoning its respectable straight-jacket and affirming its large and simple sense of the joy of life. (113)

It is marked, furthermore, by the element of carnival laughter that is present in Zola, but which does not there achieve transgressive potential. This is "a profoundly universal laughter ... that contains a whole outlook on the world" (*Dostoevsky's* 127) and that is present in James's acknowledgement of the tendency of the Epsom revellers "to laugh perpetually and at nothing" (113). It is related to parody and ridicule and is involved in the ritual undermining of the social hierarchy that is represented by class mixing; in its most extreme form it enacts a ritual of dethroning that is a form of "profanation ... playing with the symbols of a higher authority" (*Dostoevsky's* 125). Thus James describes "the desecrating progress of the Epsom revellers," (112) and the climax of the piece is a comic scene in which an "opulent" young man, "passing from stage to stage of the higher beatitude" through the indiscriminate consumption of champagne, suddenly falls "beastly drunk" from the top of his coach into "the grimiest of the rabble" below (115): "when you have seen a stupefied young man,

infinitely bedusted, slip out of the embrace of a couple of clumsy roughs for the twentieth time," James remarks, "you may very properly suppose that you have arrived at the furthest limit of the ludicrous" (116).

In his account of this scene of carnival, written a year after his permanent move to England, James maintains the bemused tone of the travel writer regarding events from a safe distance. This wry sense of security is reinforced by his awareness of the ritualized aspect of the Epsom carnival, his assurance of its being, in Eagleton's words, a licensed affair. The Derby crowd is, as he repeats several times, a "spectacle" (112) and an "entertainment" (116) observed from the safe vantage of the top of a four-horse coach that is parked in "a precinct roped off and guarded from intrusion save under payment of a fee" (114). This is a space that, unlike Hyde Park in Arnold's account of the riots, is not invaded by roughs. Moreover, the popular "unbuttoning" has the virtue of reaffirming the national character and therefore a sense or national identity, rather than implying a political threat: "... a stranger of even the most refined tastes might be glad to have a glimpse of this popular revel, for it would make him feel that he was learning something more about the English people" (117).

Although *formally* Zola's naturalism represents a threat to James's aesthetic, therefore, the voices of the people which are the political analogue of its heteroglossia are

tragically contained by their inability to be heard outside of their own class. Anarchism, in *Germinal*, is part of this failure, since in destroying the mine it only contributes, ironically, to the burden of the workers. In James, a writer whose style tends toward the monologic crushing of heteroglossia, on the other hand, there is an acute *thematic* awareness of the transgressive possibility, a possibility of the carnivalesque that is represented in its extremest form in *The Princess* by anarchism. Here there are no scenes of revelry to which carnivalesque potential can be attached. Instead, the carnivalesque in *The Princess* can be understood in its broader sense, articulated by Stallybrass and White, of social transgression. It is precisely because it is no longer contained within the licensed domain of carnival festivities here, furthermore, that the class-mixing so benignly supervised in "Three Excursions" loses its reassuringly provisional status in the novel. At the point when carnival becomes unlicensed and potentially revolutionary, it is no longer amusing but dangerous, resisting attempts to turn it into a spectacle and posing the possibility of an annihilating "deluge" (2:267) that will sweep away the observer.

Grotesqueness, for example, to the extent that it is rendered at all in *The Princess*, takes on an aspect hateful to Hyacinth's refined sensibilities, as his description of complaining workers at the "Sun and Moon" shows:

> A little shoemaker, with red eyes and a greyish face, whose appearance Hyacinth deplored, scarcely ever expressed himself but in the same form of words ... he had much in common ... with a large red-faced man, of uncertain attributes and stertorous breathing, who was understood to know a good deal about dogs, had fat hands, and wore on his forefinger a big silver ring, containing some one's hair. (1:339)

Similarly, the class mixing characteristic of the Epsom scene is present in the London society of *The Princess* in much more serious ways. Most saliently, this mixing is embo[illegible]ed by the Princess herself, an aristocrat who, like Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta, renounces her privileges to consort with anarchists and the working classes. Rather than celebrating her philanthropy, the novel reveals its anxiety about such dangerous social mobility by ridiculing her excursions as a kind of slumming that indulges her own romantic fantasies:

> She said, very naturally that one couldn't go and stare at people for an impression without paying them, and she gave alms right and left, indiscriminately, without enquiry or judgement, as simply as the abbess of some beggar-haunted convent, or a lady bountiful of the superstitious unscientific ages who should have hoped to be assisted to heaven by her doles ... [H]er behaviour, after all, was more addressed to relieving

> herself than to relieving others ... What she gave away was her savings, the margin she had succeeded in creating; and now that she had tasted of the satisfaction of making little hoards for such a purpose she regarded her other years, with their idleness and waste, their merely personal motives, as a long, stupid sleep of the conscience. To do something for others was not only so much more human, but so much more amusing! (2:260-61)

More tragically, class mixing is embodied -- literally -- by the "mixed, divided nature" (2:263) of Hyacinth, who is the offspring of an English Lord and a French commoner. His class-mixture is symbolized by his somewhat incongruous name, and produces in him an anxiety about his own identity that is rendered as a "darkness and confusion" and "inevitable freezing horror" (1:113). This turmoil, which reaches a crisis at a point during the Princess's sorties into the underworld, is figured, like the carnivalesque traffic in Jenkins, by aquatic metaphors: "There was no peace for him between the two currents that flowed in his nature" (2:264). As a relief from his torment Hyacinth entertains the possibility of welcoming the impending revolution as kind of carnivalesque apotheosis, rendered, again, in aquatic terms:

> What was most in Hyacinth's mind was the idea of which every pulsation of the general life of his time was a

> syllable, that the flood of democracy was rising over the world; that it would sweep all the traditions of the past before it; ... At the same time there was joy, exultation, in the thought of surrendering one's self to the wash of the wave, of being carried higher on the sun-touched crests of wild billows than one could ever be by a dry lonely effort of one's own. That vision could deepen to ecstasy; make it indifferent whether one's ultimate fate, in such a heaving sea, were not almost certainly to be submerged in bottomless depths or dashed to pieces on immoveable rocks ... (2:262-63)

His final act is another version of self-annihilation, not a carnivalesque transcending of the limits of his isolated individuality but a "dry lonely effort of one's own," that can be read as his final gesture against the mixing of classes. By killing himself Hyacinth annihilates his own mixed history in addition to rejecting the future class mixing represented by the revolution, of which his assassination of the Duke would be a precursor.

In its repudiation of his revolutionary commitment, Hyacinth's death can be read as an ultimate rejection of anarchism in the name of art; it protects the aristocratic Duke against an act of democratic terror that he turns back on itself. It is therefore an artistic martyrdom that stands exactly opposite Lingg's suicide in the name of anarchism in Harris's *The Bomb*. It is also a reminder of

the irreconcilability of art and democracy, the two political poles within which the novel operates. It is the limitations of this bipolar vision in *The Princess* that determines the somewhat incongruous equivalence it proposes between anarchism and vulgarity that sees anarchism exclusively as a threat to taste. As Allon White notes, "Vulgarity in James never loses its class dimension" (140); indeed, it is a term that he uses quite literally to designate the aesthetic disposition of the "democratic, malodorous common" that he sees trampling through Zola's books, but which in his own novel become distinctively threatening.

The Princess occupies a critical position in the confirmation of this attitude in James, since it represents an experiment in negotiating a space for the vulgar in his own novelistic discourse. It is worth noting, however, that the opposition between art and revolution preexists the novel. In *A Little Tour in France* (1882), for example, he describes meeting "the spectre of the great Revolution ... always in the shape of the destruction of something beautiful and precious" (193). "Revolutionists," as Donald David Stone comments, "... become invariably connected in [James'] mind with 'image breakers'" (288). Similarly, the kind of carnivalesque transgression that in Chapter One I associated with the Hyde Park riots, and which is referred to in the opinions of the workers in the "Sun and Moon,"

that "the only way was to pull up the Park rails again," (1:339) represents an association of public/private transgression with vulgarity that can also be found in James's later work. Looking out the window of her father's rooms at the beginning of *The Wings of the Dove*, for example, Kate Croy notes how

> the vulgar little street, in this view, offered scant relief from the vulgar little room; its main office was to suggest to her that the narrow black house-fronts, adjusted to a standard that would have been low even for backs, constituted quite the publicity implied by such privacies. One felt them in the room exactly as one felt the room -- the hundred like it or worse -- in the street. (1:3)

In *The Princess*, however, vulgarity is not a quality only of inanimate objects or an assault solely on the senses, but a threat to the social order that cannot be defused by historical distance. Moreover, this aversion to destructive vulgarity informs the Arnoldian critique of the aristocracy upon which, as Alwyn Berland[6] recognizes, the novel's politics rest. Carnivalesque class mixing, in this critique, extends through all levels of society, threatening to turn the upper classes into Barbarians against whom the "civilising energy" (2:262) of Hyacinth, the novel's spiritual aristocrat and "true artist" (2:155) is inadequate. Hyacinth's impression of the misery of the

slums is associated not with his awareness of material poverty, but of lack of taste:

> He was aware that the people were direfully wretched -- more conscious, it often seemed to him, than they themselves were; so frequently was he struck with their brutal insensibility, a grossness proof against the taste of better things or to any desire for them. (2:262)

It is this awareness that provokes his rejection of his revolutionary affiliations, for

> In spite of the example Eustache Poupin gave him of the reconcilement of disparities, he was afraid the democracy wouldn't care for perfect bindings or for the finer sorts of conversation (2:263).

What revolution threatens is not the eradication of this vulgarity, but its "redistribution," (397) the spread of the taint of grossness throughout the whole of society. The beginning of this incipient spread of vulgarity is the carnivalesque class-mixing whose extension to the highest social strata is symbolized by the name of the Princess's estate, Medley; the musical connotations of the name also suggest Hoffendahl's symphony of destruction, just as his organizational mastery is compared to her piano playing (2:55).

The transgression of culture by the anarchy of vulgarization is abetted by the novel's main aristocratic

characters. Godfrey Sholto, for example, is savaged by the Princess, in a moment of considerable irony, for his vulgar pretensions:

> Sholto was a curious and not particularly edifying English type ... one of those odd figures produced by old societies that have run to seed, corrupt, exhausted civilisations ... He had a little taste, a little cleverness, a little reading, a little good furniture, a little French and Italian (he exaggerated these latter quantities), an immense deal of assurance, and unmitigated leisure. That, at bottom, was all he represented -- idle, trifling, luxurious, yet at the same time pretentious leisure, the sort of thing that led people to invent false, humbugging duties, because they had no real ones. Sholto's great idea of himself ... was that he was a cosmopolite ... He was not in the least a natural quiet person, but had a hundred affectations and attitudes, the result of never having been obliged to put his hand to anything; having no serious tastes and yet being born to a little position. (2:82-83)

In a word he is "vulgar," as Lady Aurora Langrish says, (279) cultivating only the "exterior" (*Culture* 103) affectations characteristic of the "sterility and futility" that Arnold sees as contributing to the aristocracy's encouragement of anarchy.

The most scandalous act of class mixing, one that is consistent with her anarchist sympathies, is performed by the Princess herself when she moves into her residence in Madeira Crescent, a "low, stucco fronted edifice, in a shabby, shallow semicircle," that epitomizes the democratic assault on taste. This house rivals that of the "thick-fingered" Crookendens (2:256):

> ... the window-place in the parlour, on a level with the street-door, was ornamented by a glass case containing stuffed birds and surmounted by an alabaster Cupid ... The street ... was mean and meagre and fourth-rate, and had in the highest degree that petty, parochial air, that absence of style and elevation, which is the stamp of whole districts of London ... As they stopped before the narrow, ill-painted door, on which the number of the house appeared on a piece of common porcelain cut in a fanciful shape, it struck [Hyacinth] ... that it would take the romantic out of one's heroism to settle one's self in such a paltry, Philistine row. (2:175-76)

The dangers of anarchism are thus prefigured by the Princess's collapsing of the Arnoldian distinction between upper and middle classes, the reduction of the "refinement of an aristocracy" to "the vulgarity and hideousness" of middle class life. It is thus ironic that her maiden name, as the Preface indicates, and as readers of *Roderick Hudson*

will know, is Light, which, along with "sweetness" is for Arnold one of the two ingredients of culture (54).

Anarchism proper poses a more dire threat to culture even than that represented by the Princess's wilful Philistinism. This threat is articulated in what, as I suggested earlier, is a kind of aesthetic and political manifesto for the novel as a whole, Hyacinth's letter from Venice. The letter functions, I would argue, as an ironic intertext with Ruskin's "The Nature of Gothic," the central chapter of *The Stones of Venice* (1853), which, appropriately enough, was distributed as a pamphlet at the Working Men's College in 1854. Ruskin, like Morris, proposes a theory of social beauty in which the alienation of the worker, "the degradation of the operative into a machine," (86) is remedied by the transformation of his labour into creative and meaningful forms. Acknowledging, furthermore, that this alienation is a product of market forces, he insists on the need to educate the middle classes to reject commodities into which no creative labour has gone.

Ruskin uses as an example of such a commodity glass beads, and it is precisely the exploited glass bead makers, "pattering over the Venetian stones," (2:143) that Hyacinth, admires as picturesque: "The Venetian girl-face is wonderfully sweet and the effect is charming when its pale sad oval (they all look underfed) is framed in the old faded shawl" (2:142). Labour is useful, therefore, only to the

extent that it serves beauty, a situation impossible in England. Indeed, where Ruskin sees the individualism of the "Northern temperament" revealed in Gothic art as yielding a creativity characterized by vigorous "rudeness," (80) James sees only the vulgarity represented by the patrons of the "Sun and Moon;" and to the gothic style that expresses the "Savageness" and "Grotesqueness" of the imagination of the anonymous workman (79) James opposes an aesthetic that "disengage[s the work of art] from the rude human character and the more or less gothic text in which it has been packed away" (1:ix). We can see his attitude to naturalism reproduced in this resistance to the proliferating detail of Ruskinian gothic. Conversely, where Ruskin sees in Southern architecture evidence of an autocratic will, James sees the "treasures of art ... the general fabric of civilization as we know it." It is against this fabric that the anarchist Hoffendahl would commit the greatest, sacrilegious vulgarity; as Hyacinth writes,

> if there's one thing that's more clear about him than another, it's that he wouldn't have the least feeling for this incomparable abominable old Venice. He would cut up the ceilings of the Veronese into strips, so that every one might have a little piece. I don't want every one to have a little piece of anything and I have a great horror of that kind of invidious jealousy at the bottom of the idea of a redistribution. (2:146)

It is this fear of the extremity of democratic vulgarity, the carnivalesque tearing to pieces of the very body of art itself, that anarchism represents in *The Princess Casamassima*.

What does this awareness of the resurgence of the carnivalesque mean for the politics of *The Princess*? Certainly, it indicates James's apocalyptic sense of the inevitability of revolution, as Woodcock notes ("Henry James" 220); in a letter to A.C. Benson James wrote in 1896, "I have the imagination of disaster," (35) and we can discern an earlier version of this sentiment in *The Princess*'s murky intimations of revolution. Moreover the book's symbolic rectifications of the social hierarchy -- Rose Muniment's question, "If every one was equal ... where would be the gratification I feel in getting a visit from a grandee?" (2:172) for example, or Lady Aurora's renunciation of her anarchist sympathies to return to her rightful place in the social hierarchy -- are inadequate in the face of the scandalous class mixing represented by the Princess, and when compared with Hyacinth's suicide, which is seen as the only effective rejection of the hybridization of culture and anarchy in the novel. This is because Rose's apartment, as the home of Paul and visiting place of the Princess and Lady Aurora is itself a symbol of class-mixing, and because Lady Aurora, after she returns to Belgrave Square, cannot escape the vulgarity the Princess embraces: "She had on a ...

crumpled looking dress; her head was adorned with a kind of languid plume, that flushed into little pink tips" (2:352).

In this respect, then, the novel articulates its expectation of the rising tide of vulgarity, even as, in its monologic aesthetic, it attempts to escape that vulgarity by working toward the rarefied, 'poetic' style characteristic of the late James. This later style, which Terry Eagleton characterizes as "the astonishing enterprise of rescuing and redeeming inorganic material existence by ceaselessly absorbing its raw contingencies into the transmutative structures of consciousness," (*Criticism* 145) moves away from the confrontation with the material aspects of lower class experience in *The Princess* that threaten the operations of such a subordinating consciousness. As such we can see in the novel an honesty about its class affiliations that, though we may consider it repugnant, is through the very effects of muffling and obscuration remarkably clear.

In *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold argues that the "doing as one likes" of the aristocracy and middle-classes only becomes threatening at the point when the lower classes also begin to assert their individualism:

> ... the old story of our system of checks and every Englishman doing as he likes ... we have ... seen to be convenient enough so long as there were only the Barbarians and the Philistines to do what they liked,

> but [it is] getting inconvenient, and productive of anarchy, now that the Populace wants to do what it likes too. (121)

The very ground of *The Princess Casamassima*'s scepticism toward the possibilities for art represented by a corrupt aristocracy, similarly, is not its criticism of the aristocracy, but its fear of revolution and the lower classes, the anarchic sources of vulgarity itself. Unable to imagine a concept of culture that transcends class, as Arnold can, James sees in the decay of the aristocracy the "decay of the aura," (Benjamin 262) that leads not to the "renewal of mankind" through mass movements, (221) but to the triumph of the "beastly political"[7] (*Letters* 3:67) of which anarchism is the apotheosis.

Endnotes

[1]Anderson's claim that the relationship between *The Princess* and *Germinal* is "slight" (314) seems to be made from the point of view of direct influence. I, on the other hand, consider James's relationship to Zola's aesthetic in general, focussing on *Germinal* as a point of comparison to the extent that it is a novel that contains an anarchist character. Nevertheless, in a letter to Theodore Child written while he was working on *The Princess*, James described *Germinal* as "in many ways admirable," (3:354) and in his essay on Zola groups it with *L'Assommoir* and *La Débâcle* as one of the "productions in which he must most survive" (258). it is far from impossible, therefore, to imagine James's Hoffendahl as a response to Zola's Souvarine.

[2]The connection with naturalism is made more explicit in the 1886 text, which describes these realists as "advanced and scientific" (264). I have used the New York Edition (1909) of James's works in this chapter, indicating any changes from the earlier text, published by MacMillan and reprinted by Penguin, where relevant.

[3]The 1886 text reads: "They know everything -- everything. Oh, they go straight!" (559), and therefore

does not contain the divine overtones of the New York Edition. This does not affect my argument, however, since Hoffendahl's power of overseeing is, I think, implied in the descriptions of his mastery over innumerable revolutionary threads.

Seltzer invokes this passage to support his ingenious Foucauldian reading of *The Princess*, in which he demonstrates that "James's analysis of anarchist politics is less significant than the power play that the narrative technique enacts" (29). Seltzer reads the novel as reinforcing the structures of cultural power through its deployment of visual metaphors that reveal its complicity in the surveillance by which power is distributed throughout the social body. To the extent that it rejects Seltzer's Foucauldian assumptions (as they are expressed in *Discipline and Punish*), my reading cannot agree with his. His identification of Hoffendahl as instrumental in cultural surveillance seems to me particularly problematic, given that Hoffendahl's intimate knowledge of society is, like the kind of knowledge encouraged by Nechaev in the *Revolutionary Catechism*, intended for the destruction of society, and therefore also, presumably, the specular controls by which society, in Seltzer's view, maintains itself.

[4]Tingle's reading of James claims that his "formalist fictions derive their force and purpose from a rewriting or

opening up of realist and naturalist assumptions" (65). In place of these assumptions, he sees the obscuration I have noted here as an interrogation of realist assumptions:

> It is through this *lack* or deficiency of an exact or particular knowledge of the anarchist movement that [James] ... attempt[s] to depict, a condition of knowing that is perpetually elusive, hovering, as it were, just out of reach. (65)

In this reading lack of detail, rather than being the shortcoming that many critics have seen it as, becomes an end in itself.

[5]It should be emphasized here that Bakhtin's notion of poetic language is narrow and considerably idiosyncratic, and functions primarily, in my view, as a foil for his conception of novelistic discourse. In making the suggestion that *The Princess* approximates this notion of the poetic, therefore, I do not intend the absurd claim that the novel is therefore representative of poetic language in general. At the same time, neither do I wish to suggest that heteroglossia is not present at all in *The Princess*. As Bakhtin himself notes, "The dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is ... a property of *any* discourse," ("Discourse" 279) not just novelistic discourse, so that "poetic" language, too, dialogizes multiple social voices. In the case of *The Princess*, however, it does so

via a style that seeks to contain the potential unruliness of these voices, rather than celebrating them.

[6]Berland writes that "Arnold's well-known opposition of culture and the mere machinery of social reform, the occasion for *Culture and Anarchy*, finds its strong and extended re-affirmation in James ... explicitly in *The Princess Casamassima*" (29-30). In his chapter on the novel, however, he does not make detailed connections between it and Arnold's text.

[7]James uses this expression, appropriately, in a letter to Grace Norton in which he reports the Fenian bombing of Westminster Hall, the House of Commons and the Tower of London mentioned in Chapter One.

Chapter Three

"One Sort of Wretchedness": Anarchism in *The Secret Agent*

In John Sayles's comic short story "At The Anarchists' Convention" (1975) elderly veterans of American labour wars file into the lobby of a New York hotel, past a sign that reads "WELCOME ANARCHISTS," on which is drawn "the caricature of Bakunin, complete with sizzling bomb in hand" (510). The narrator's indignation at this symbol -- "Personally, I think it's in bad taste, the bomb throwing bit. It's the enemy's job to ridicule, not ours" (511) -- is just the beginning of the personal jealousies and resentments that mark the meeting. At the story's end, however, all internal dissent is overcome in a unified protest against the hotel manager who attempts to give the room the anarchists have reserved to a contingent from the Rotary Club:

> Sophie is organizing us into squads and only Baker holding Weiss bodily allows Mr. Manager to escape the room in one piece ... Nobody bickers, nobody stalls or debates or splinters. We manage to turn the long table around by the door as a kind of barricade, stack the chairs together in a second line of defense and crate Mrs. Axelrod back out of harm's way ... And when the manager returns with his two befuddled street cops [he]

> finds us standing together, arms linked, the lame held up out of their wheelchairs, the deaf joining from memory as Bud Odum leads us in "We Shall Not Be Removed" ... (519)

Sayles's anarchists share only their infirmity with Conrad's, whose internal discord and mutual disdain prevent even the kind of solidarity shown here. The revolutionists of *The Secret Agent* exemplify a powerlessness and an apparent lack of genuine danger that distinguishes them from the shadowy terrorists of *The Princess Casamassima*. We might account for this difference by historicizing the publication of the two novels. *The Princess*, published in 1886, in the middle of the European outrages when the Socialist League was largely anarchist and Kropotkin had just founded the Freedom Group in England, does not have the benefit of hindsight available to Conrad about the ultimate fate of British anarchism. By 1907, militant anarchism had clearly not taken root in England, and even the dire days of continental terrorism, though not yet over, were on the wane.

The cynicism of *The Secret Agent* toward anarchist politics is just one of the differences between it and James's novel. Of these, the most notable is the engagement with history the novel demonstrates in its choice of an actual event, the Greenwich Park bombing, as its source. Norman Sherry's demonstration of the research undertaken by

Conrad, despite the novelist's protestations that the book grew solely from his hearing a conversational mention of the incident indicates a determination on Conrad's part to investigate at least to some extent the anarchist underworld willingly obscured in James.[1]

Indeed, while darkness and silence, characteristically, have large roles in *The Secret Agent*, they are deployed to produce effects that differ strikingly from the sense of mystery that surrounds the fatal meeting with Hoffendahl at the centre of *The Princess*. Conrad's novel, like James's, has an absent centre that is hollowed out, so to speak, by the blast of the Greenwich bomb. Unlike *The Princess*, however, this absence, in addition to being epistemological, is ontological. Where the obscurity at the heart of the earlier book conceals a lack of knowledge that is determined by James's aversion to the vulgar, the blankness at the centre of *The Secret Agent* has a paradoxically revelatory effect: instead of concealing the unacceptable, it reveals the terrifying truth of nothingness, absence, and physical annihilation that has an analogue in the moral nihilism that Conrad sees as threatening all levels of society.

We can note in this respect the contrasting attitudes of the two novels to what happens in their respective central analepses. In James, the events that occur at the meeting with Hoffendahl are recounted retrospectively by their witness, Hyacinth. In Conrad, on the other hand,

Heat's forensic reconstruction of events, instead of relying on the muffling effects of memory, is gruesomely anthropophagic:

> Another waterproof sheet was spread over that table in the manner of a table cloth, with the corners turned up over a sort of mound -- a heap of rags, scorched and blood stained, half concealing what might have been an accumulation of raw material for a cannibal feast ... the by-products of a butcher's shop with a view to an inexpensive Sunday dinner. (70-71)

Stevie's autopsy thus creates a shock undiminished by its distance in time from the explosion itself.

Conrad, indeed, has little in common with the Jamesian concern for protecting the reader from the potentially offensive, particularly in his descriptions of lower class life. The passage in which a cabman conveys Winnie's mother to a retirement cottage, for example, exploits the kind of grotesque elements from which Hyacinth's repugnance for the patrons of the "Sun and Moon" shies away:

> The conveyance awaiting them would have illustrated the proverb that "truth can be more cruel than caricature," if such a proverb existed. Crawling behind an infirm horse, a metropolitan hackney drew up on wobbly wheels and with a maimed driver on the box ... a hooked iron contrivance protrud[ed] from the left sleeve of the man's coat ... The passionate expostulations of the big

> faced cabman seemed to be squeezed out of a blocked throat ... His enormous and unwashed countenance flamed red in the muddy stretch of the street. (121)

The Secret Agent, therefore, unlike *The Princess Casamassima*, engages intimately though unsympathetically in descriptions of working class life. It does so in the context of an attitude to society that rejects even the possibility of refinement. In *The Secret Agent* the grotesque is augmented by a sense of the inescapable materiality of existence, "the majesty," over everything else, "of inorganic nature, of matter that never dies" (17). This sense is so prevailing that the novel's emphasis on physical objects extends to its descriptions of characters themselves; on his way to meet Vladimir at the embassy, for example, Mr Verloc, "a soft kind of rock," encounters "a thick police constable, looking ... as if he too were part of inorganic nature, surging apparently out of a lamp post" (17).

In its ubiquity, the material in *The Secret Agent* is cancelled out as a determining fact of class life; the novel's reduction of people to lumps of matter obscures the economic relations that subdivide society, prompting Verloc's cynical reflection on Hyde Park:

> He surveyed through the park railings the evidences of the town's opulence and luxury with an approving eye. All these people had to be protected ... and their

> horses, carriages, houses, servants had to be protected; and the source of their wealth had to be protected ... the whole social order favourable to their hygienic idleness had to be protected against the shallow enviousness of unhygienic labour. (15-16)

The equation of hygienic idleness and unhygienic labour here erases class difference in a way that reduces the distinction marked by the inside and outside of the park to one merely superficial. In *The Secret Agent* people are differentiated only by their relative roles in society's game.

Given the absence of carnivalesque fears noted here, as well as the emphasis on the grotesque and the material displayed throughout the novel, it comes as something of a surprise to find an account of the book's origins in the Author's Note that is strikingly reminiscent of James's Preface to *The Princess*:

> Personally I have never had any doubt of the reality of Mrs Verloc's story; but it had to be disengaged from its obscurity in that immense town, it had to be made credible ... I had to fight hard to keep at arms-length the memories of my solitary and nocturnal walks all over London in my early days, lest they should rush in and overwhelm each page of the story as these emerged one after another from a mood as sincere in feeling and thought as any in which I ever wrote a line. (7)

Conrad's account of his fighting off the memories of his nocturnal walks and of his need to disengage Winnie from the obscurity of London is suggestive of James's fending off the "importunate wings" of street experience, and his disengaging his characters from the gothic text into which they have been packed. What is most striking about the Note is the need it expresses for a vantage point, a position of order and control from which to survey the subject matter that threatens otherwise, as Conrad writes, to rush in and overwhelm him. The will to order expressed here is informed by motivations other than those that determine *The Princess*'s attempts to gain distance from 'low' subject matter. James's quarrel with the disorderly crowds and crude descriptions of naturalism, as we have seen, is aesthetic. Conrad's concerns on the other hand, though they produce formal effects, are, according to him, moral and rational.

The Secret Agent, accordingly, suggests a different critical approach than the one employed in my chapter on James. Certainly, the tension between newspaper heteroglossia and aesthetic style can be seen to be present in the novel, especially in light of its articulating certain anarchist stereotypes, while at the same time constructing newspapers as the "eruption of ... damp, rubbishy sheets of paper soiled with printers' ink [and] ... maculated with filth" (65). This tension is less

significant in *The Secret Agent* than it is in *The Princess*, however, in that as Sherry has convincingly shown, Conrad pursued research into anarchism to a degree much greater than James, relying not just on newspaper accounts of their activities. Instead, he had access to anarchist activity in London, mainly through Ford Madox Ford, with whom he spent time immediately prior to the writing of the novel -- Ford had direct knowledge of anarchism through his cousins the Rossettis who edited *The Torch*. As Sherry demonstrates, for example, it is the circumstances surrounding the publication of *The Torch* that the short story "The Informer", written shortly before *The Secret Agent* was begun, is based (205-18).

The anxiety about low forms that determines *The Princess*'s repression of heteroglossia is therefore to a large extent absent from *The Secret Agent*. Similarly, while I will show that Conrad's novel articulates an anxiety about the lower classes, it does not do so in terms of the fear of the carnivalesque noted in James. Indeed, the closest things to communal gathering in Conrad's novel, the meeting of the anarchists in Verloc's parlour, the conversations between the Professor and Ossipon in the Silenus Restaurant, or Winnie's exchanges with Verloc in his shop are marked not by an anxiety about aesthetic vulgarity but by the narrator's cynical response to what he regards as moral and intellectual bankruptcy. I will therefore not be examining

Conrad from the Bakhtinian perspective of the previous chapter, an approach that allowed me to demonstrate the ideological consequences of James's explicitly aesthetic concerns. Instead, I will be looking at the novel in terms of the various strategies by which it seeks, through explicitly metaphysical and political, rather than aesthetic, understandings of anarchism, to contain and reduce the irrationality that the movement represents for Conrad. It is important to recognize, nevertheless, that these strategies involve dialogic relationships with other texts, including Lombrosian criminology and, more centrally to this chapter, Nietzschean thought. *The Secret Agent*'s ambivalent dialogue with Nietzsche is instrumental, as I will argue, in its construction of anarchism.

The strategies by which *The Secret Agent* reduces anarchism to manageable forms are anticipated in the Author's Note, which provides a model for the novel's attempt to translate the threatening otherness of anarchism into morally and rationally comprehensible terms. Conrad explains the moral dimension of the novel's will to comprehension in his defence of *The Secret Agent* against the complaints of some of its first critics. Though many of the early reviews were favourable, as he acknowledges, those that were not attacked him on grounds of decency. Of Verloc's death, for example, the reviewer for *Country Life* complained that while "Killing, undoubtedly, is a necessity

... it is as indecent to exhibit a murder done in this slow and tedious manner as it would be to have the shambles of a butcher in the public streets" (188-89). Similarly, the *Edinburgh Review* described the anarchists in the novel as a group "upon whose repulsiveness no redeeming lights are attempted to be thrown," (202) and concluded that "If any embellishment of art, or service to society, is done by the concoction of such a story, clever as it may be, we confess that we fail to detect either" (202).

Conrad's response to these reviews is to countermand suggestions that the novel's 'unpleasantries' are "gratuitous" (43) by drawing attention to the narrator's distance from the events he describes. "It seems to me now," he writes in the Author's Note

> that even an artless person might have foreseen that some criticisms would be based on the ground of sordid surroundings and the moral squalor of the tale ... But the thought to elaborate mere ugliness, to shock or even simply to surprise my readers by a change of front has never entered my head. (3-4)

Instead, "the whole treatment of the tale, its inspiring indignation and underlying pity and contempt" have the precisely opposite effect: they "prove my detachment from the squalor and sordidness which lie in the outward circumstances of the setting" (4).

Contempt, here, establishes moral distance, justifying the squalor to which its disdain might otherwise seem to contribute. This moral separation from the appalling reality he describes, moreover, is necessary for Conrad's rational understanding of that reality, an understanding that was absent from his first reaction to the story of the Greenwich Bombing,

> a blood-stained inanity of so fatuous a kind that it was impossible to fathom its origin by any reasonable or even unreasonable process of thought ... that outrage could not be laid hold of mentally in any sort of way, so that one remained faced by the fact of a man blown to bits for nothing even most remotely resembling an idea, anarchistic or other. (5)

The Secret Agent can be read precisely as Conrad's attempt to come to terms with the events surrounding the Greenwich Park explosion through the establishment of an objective distance. This rational comprehension of an otherwise inexplicable event folds back, in turn, into the moral perspective; though it is in one sense a forensic procedure, the reconstruction of the crime scene familiar to readers of detective fiction, the intellectual exercise of detection takes a back seat in *The Secret Agent* to the examination of the moral consequences of the explosion. The reconstruction of events that occurs through Heat's refiguring of Stevie's disfigured corpse is an allegory for

the moral anatomy performed on society itself by the novel.

Morality and reason provide Conrad with an "idea" in the light of which the Greenwich bombing might be comprehensible. Conrad describes the effect of such an idea on the raw material of the event, of which in itself "there was not much to see," (5) in terms that recall Eliot's famous metaphor for poetic inspiration in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" published the year before the Author's Note:

> ... then ensued in my mind what a student of chemistry would best understand from the analogy of the addition of the tiniest little drop of the right kind, precipitating the process of crystallisation in a test tube containing some colourless solution. (6)

The idea that produces such crystallization here, however, is paradoxically that of "secrecy," as Conrad encounters it in a work that Sherry (287) identifies as Robert Anderson's *Sidelights on the Home Rule Movement* (1906). Its effect, moreover, is to replace the "illuminating quality" (5) of the original material, the "plenty of light" (5) it sheds on the imagination, with its diametrical opposite, "the vision of an enormous town ... a cruel devourer of the world's light" (6). The attempt to shed light on the inexplicable story of Greenwich, therefore, has a visually and epistemologically dimming effect such that the shape taken by the novel as it unfolds is one of darkness and secrecy.

In this chapter I will argue that this famously paradoxical Conradian effect -- the emergence at the moment of clarity of an obscuring darkness, and vice versa -- has decidedly political ramifications for *The Secret Agent*'s construction of anarchism. In moving from its inspiring idea to its crystallized form, the novel fights to reduce the element of the incomprehensible that first leaves its author "dumb" (5) and unable to speak of it. In doing so, however, it must acknowledge the basic otherness of anarchism to its own political ideology, an otherness that, in the figure of the Professor threatens to open up an annihilating nothingness at the heart of the novel. As Terry Eagleton writes, the "resonant silence" at the centre of *The Secret Agent*, the explosion itself, indicates "the gaps and limits of the Conradian ideology" (*Criticism* 138). *The Secret Agent* is "haunted ... with the ghost it must exorcise if the narrative is to survive" (139), the ghost of revolution.

The novel acknowledges its awareness of the paradoxical nature of its attempts to comprehend the incomprehensible through its description of the 'artist' Stevie who draws

> circles, circles, circles; innumerable circles, concentric, eccentric; a coruscating whirl of circles that by their tangled multitude of repeated curves, uniformity of form, and confusion of intersecting lines

> suggested a rendering of cosmic chaos, the symbolism of a mad artist attempting the inconceivable. (40)

The Secret Agent thus sets itself the "inconceivable" task of reducing to its own ideology the political otherness represented by anarchism, as well as some additional political othernesses with which anarchism is associated. It does so most crucially through its construction of the character of the Professor, an "extreme type" of anarchist, (*Letters* 3:491) from whom it performs a strategic retreat, therefore reducing anarchism's otherness from a form of threatening nihilism to an instance of fanatical religious idealism that is linked with the specific social dangers represented by foreign imperialism and the lower classes.

In doing so, the novel assimilates the Professor, the threatening "true propagandist" (58) who makes his appearance in the immediate aftermath of the explosion, as if released by its annihilating energies, to the status of the novel's other revolutionists, all of whom are, from the beginning, represented as ineffective frauds. This fraudulence is also associated with social weakness and degeneracy, however, and thus becomes a danger in its own right. The novel constructs revolutionaries through caricatures that participate in some of the elements of anarchist typology that we have already seen, as well as one as yet unexamined. This is the element of Nietzschean thought, a parody of which it deploys in the case of the

Professor. The text's attitude to Nietzsche is ambivalent, however, since it also articulates a Nietzschean critique of idealism in its attack on anarchism as a form of asceticism. In the following pages I hope to show how *The Secret Agent*'s selective use of Nietzschean categories allows it to both utilize and reject Nietzschean thought, finally associating this thought politically, through the character of the Professor, with the combined threat of foreign imperialism, the lower classes and anarchism.

Before engaging with *The Secret Agent*'s relationship with Nietzsche, however, it will be useful to examine other ways in which the novel constructs anarchism as a component of a widespread social degeneracy.[2] One of these ways is the relating of it ironically to the categories of Lombrosian criminology, which the novel regards as not only inadequate for the containment of anarchism, but symptomatic of the all-encompassing social malaise of which anarchism is a part.[3] It is helpful in this respect to compare the novel's construction of anarchism with that of Lombroso himself.

In his article "The Physiognomy of the Anarchists" published in the April 1891 issue of *The Monist*, Lombroso argues somewhat contortedly against the execution of the Chicago anarchists. As I indicated in Chapter One, he begins by differentiating anarchists, amongst whom criminal types are apparent, from "true revolutionists" (336) whose

physiognomies are almost exclusively those of "geniuses and saints" (336). As he continues, however, Lombroso unexpectedly embarks upon the opposite task of differentiating anarchists from "true criminals," (339) despite the fact that they possess hereditary criminal traits. In a manoeuvre that threatens both the 'scientific' basis of his criminology and the distinction between anarchist and true revolutionary with which he began, Lombroso asserts that the "heroic-like [*sic*] deaths, with their ideal on their lips" (341) of the Chicago anarchists indicates that "among the anarchists there are no true criminals" (340). Instead, he argues that "hereditary anomaly," although it "provokes an anomaly in the moral sense" has the virtue of suppressing "misoneism, the horror of novelty which is almost the general rule of humanity" (341). As such it makes of anarchists potential "innovators" (341) whose existence may be socially beneficial:

> If the inclination to evil here exists in greater proportion than in law-abiding men, it nevertheless takes an altruistic turn, which is quite the contrary to that which is observed among born criminals, and which commands our admiration and arouses our pity. This inclination ... could, if it were properly directed and were not crossed by misery, prove itself of great value to humanity; it could trace for it new

> routes, and in every case be practically useful to it. (342)

Lombroso's deconstruction of his own argument here, turning anarchists into the true revolutionists from which they were initially differentiated, indicates the inadequacy of Lombrosian criminology for the containment of anarchism; though anarchists may look like miscreants, the correspondence between physical features and criminal tendencies that governs the rest of humanity does not obtain in their case. Instead, anarchists may be sharply distinguishable from criminals, and in the absence of effective criminological categories can only be described in terms of progressive morality. Rather than displaying an "absence of moral sense," (341) they are "apostles of progress," (341) "altruists" who are possibly "more useful pioneers even than law-abiding men," (342) and, in an astonishing twist that makes him sound more like Harris's Schnaubelt than a weeder out of criminals, they may even be "martyrs" (343).

The notion of the heroic revolutionary articulated here is anathematic to Conrad's understanding of anarchism as a form of self-deluded narcissism. Indeed, Lombroso's conclusion conforms to what Conrad sees as anarchism's idealized understanding of itself, an understanding that he is concerned with subverting through his ironic inclusion of Lombrosian criminological categories in *The Secret Agent*.

In his book *Conrad's Western World* (1971), Sherry begins his discussion of *The Secret Agent*'s relationship to Lombroso by citing Karl Yundt's acerbic response to Ossipon's advocacy of criminology. "Lombroso," says Yundt, "is an ass ... this imbecile who has made his way in this world of gorged fools by looking at the ears and teeth of a lot of poor, luckless devils? Teeth and ears mark the criminal? Do they?" (41). Sherry argues that the novel disagrees with Yundt's scepticism, instead choosing "to prove [Lombroso] right in the case of Ossipon, as well as of the Professor" (276). As he demonstrates, Ossipon's features, in particular his "crinkly ... hair," "flattened nose," and "prominent mouth cast in the rough mould of the Negro type" (39) betray Lombrosian criminal traits, as do the Professor's "large ears" and poor vision (88).

The general attitude to science of *The Secret Agent*, however, should make us wary of accepting these classifications uncritically. Ossipon and the Professor may be scientifically categorized, but science itself is denounced in the novel as a form of bourgeois superstition. Arguing for his choice of the Greenwich Observatory for the bomb outrage, for example, Vladimir calls science "the sacro-sanct fetish," in which "Any imbecile that has got an income believes" (30). This idolatry is confirmed specifically in the case of Lombroso at the end of the novel when Ossipon encounters Winnie after she has killed Verloc:

> He was scientific, and he gazed scientifically at that woman, the sister of a degenerate, a degenerate herself -- of a murdering type. He gazed at her, and invoked Lombroso, as an Italian peasant recommends himself to his favourite saint. (222)

Positivist science in general is inadequate to the relativistic universe of *The Secret Agent*: the apparent wandering of buildings on Verloc's walk to the embassy, and the stopping of time as the rest of his family drive past Westminster, indicate the irrational time and space that characterizes the novel's cityscape. This is especially true of criminology, as Heat's thoughts on anarchists indicate:

> His wisdom was of an official kind, or else he might have reflected upon a matter not of theory but of experience that in the close-woven stuff of relations between conspirator and police there occur unexpected solutions of continuity, sudden holes in space and time. A given anarchist may be watched inch by inch and minute by minute, but a moment always comes when somehow all sight and touch of him are lost for a few hours, during which something (generally an explosion) more or less deplorable does happen. (69)

Lombrosian techniques may *describe* anarchists, therefore, but they cannot effectively *contain* them. Furthermore, their religious espousal by the anarchist Ossipon,

corresponding to the more general idolatry of science in the novel, suggests them as symptomatic of the larger moral degeneracy that Conrad sees as afflicting British society.

The status of positivist criminology as part of the problem that it purports to address renders it ineffective in preventing the specific manifestation of moral degeneracy represented by anarchism. Inspector Heat's thoughts disqualify anarchists as criminals altogether -- "As criminals, anarchists were distinctly no class -- no class at all" (78) -- for reasons that have to do with the absence of normative standards by which they might be understood:

> Catching thieves was another matter altogether. It had that quality of seriousness belonging to every form of open sport where the best man wins under perfectly comprehensible rules. There were no rules for dealing with anarchists. (114)

These reflections, however, indicate the inadequacy of Heat's classification system rather than the unique, irreducible status of anarchists. Instead, the Professor's attempt to claim such a unique status by distinguishing himself contemptuously from *The Secret Agent*'s other anarchists, ridiculing them as "slaves of the social convention ... slaves of it as much as the very police that stands up in the defence of that convention," (58) reflect ironically back on himself, and he is constructed ultimately

to be as much a part of the general social degeneracy as the novel's other revolutionary characters.

In this respect it is worth observing the extent to which anarchists in *The Secret Agent* are regarded, in the words of one of Conrad's letters to Cunninghame Graham (3:491) as "shams" by contrasting them with constructions of more dangerous anarchists in the two short stories, "An Anarchist" and "The Informer" (1905), written a year before the novel. These differences are emphasized by superficial similarities between the three narratives. All of them, for example, centre upon the theme of the symmetry of anarchism and law, the notion that the establishment and the revolutionaries that attack it are no different from each other. This identity of anarchists and establishment is figured by the recurring theme of a parasitic, cannibalistic society in which different classes prey upon each other in an endless food chain. Paul, the protagonist of "An Anarchist", for example, is an escaped convict imprisoned once for his flirtation with anarchism, and then again on the B.O.S. cattle estate, itself a prison, where he is forced by the sadistic manager to maintain the company's steam launch. The company is shameless in its use of advertising to exploit a gullible public, thus establishing an ironic identification of anarchism and capitalism which also occurs in "The Informer," where anarchism is identified metaphorically with consumption: propaganda and explosives

are smuggled out of the house where they are manufactured in cans of Stones Dried Soup, "a yellow powder of extremely unappetizing aspect" (28).

This metaphorical cannibalism anticipates the parasitical social order of *The Secret Agent*, in which it is, ironically, the anarchist Karl Yundt who describes society as "cannibalistic" (44) in terms reminiscent of the B.O.S. estate:

> And what about the law that marks [the criminal] ... the pretty branding instrument invented by the overfed to protect themselves against the hungry? Red hot applications on their vile skins -- hey? Can't you smell and hear from here the thick hide of the people burn and sizzle? (41)

Yundt is not wrong, but he too participates in the novel's cannibalism along with the rest of society. The result of the bomb-plot is the mangled "cannibal feast" of Stevie's remains; Winnie murders Verloc with the carving knife with which he has been slicing meat; and Stevie, in his encounter with the cabman, is appalled by "his sense of indignation and horror at one set of wretchedness having to feed upon the anguish of the other" (132), a revelation of parasitism that recalls the description of anarchism found in the Author's Note: "the contemptible aspect of the half crazy pose as of a brazen cheat exploiting the poignant miseries

and passionate credulities of a mankind always so tragically eager for self-destruction" (5).

While the short stories suggest typological constructions of anarchism as an aggressively determined, fanatical strength, *The Secret Agent*, as we shall see in more detail later, constructs it as a symptom of general social weakness. In this respect the sham anarchists of the novel contribute to the threat of widespread degeneration, rather than corresponding to the aggressive social enemy that provokes a tone of panicky outrage in the narrator of the short stories. This sense of outrage is especially strong when the anarchists are themselves members of the establishment, aristocratic or bourgeois revolutionaries who, like James's Princess, advocate a cause that threatens their own social class. The narrator of "The Informer", for example, is appalled by his similarity in class and tastes to the anarchist X, who is "a kind of rare monster":

> He was alive and European; he had the manner of good society, wore a coat and hat like mine, and had pretty near the same taste in cooking. It was too frightful to think of ... And I had the audacity to ask him how it was that the starving proletariat of Europe to whom he had been preaching revolt and violence had not been made indignant by his openly luxurious life. (23-24)

X condemns as inauthentic the bourgeois "young lady" in whose house anarchist propaganda and bombs are manufactured.

Though he reflects on the irony of this judgement, the narrator similarly deplores the young lady's cosmetic anarchism as a mask for her egotism:

> I suppose she put on these appearances as she put on her picturesque dresses and for the same reason: to assert her individuality at any cost ... She had acquired all the appropriate gestures of revolutionary convictions -- the gestures of pity, of anger, of indignation against the anti-humanitarian vices of the social classes to which she belonged herself. All this sat on her striking personality as well as her slightly original costumes. (26-27)

By contrast, *The Secret Agent*'s criticism of the "deep, calm convinced infatuation" of the bourgeois lady patroness of the ex-convict Michaelis, who "could not conceive how [universal ruin] could affect her position" (88) is considerably less caustic, approaching instead a tone of comic irony. The reason for this is that anarchist doctrine in the novel, in particular the version of this doctrine expounded by Michaelis, is regarded as absurdly ineffectual and therefore not dangerous. X's criticism of bourgeois involvement with revolutionaries in "The Informer," on the other hand, describes it as a form of courting self-destruction that is ignorant of the power of "a real movement and of words that have no sham meaning," (25) a power that contrasts sharply with the sham anarchists of *The*

Secret Agent. Anarchism in "The Informer" is in fact genuinely, and stereotypically, dangerous.

Anarchist ruthlessness, for example, is implied by the suicide of the double agent Sevrin that prevents him from falling into the hands of the revolutionaries he has betrayed. This element, moreover, is combined with fanaticism and terror; upon staging his mock police raid on the house, X hurries to its top floor to prevent the Professor -- an early version of the character in the novel -- from "blow[ing] himself up and wreck[ing] the house about our ears" (32) while at the time of the raid, the anarchists have tunnelled under the "great public building" next door, of which "The blowing up of a whole wing was a certainty as soon as the materials were ready" (30).

In the short stories, moreover, the threat of anarchist violence is an organized one, constructed like one of Bakunin's imaginary European conspiracies that is large enough and sufficiently interconnected for an informer in the British branch to imperil both domestic and continental operations. X is the mastermind behind this conspiracy:

> He is the greatest rebel (*révolté*) of modern times. The world knows him as a revolutionary writer whose savage irony has laid bare the rottenness of the most respectable institutions ... Who does not remember his flaming red revolutionary pamphlets? ... But this extreme writer has also been the active inspiration of

> secret societies, the mysterious Number One of desperate conspiracies suspected and unsuspected, matured or baffled ... a veteran of many subterranean campaigns. (21-22)

His network, like Hoffendahl's, is everywhere, as the location of the British branch in the house of a government official demonstrates. Moreover, the function of the Hermione Street group, to disseminate anarchist propaganda and explosives to the continent, "under the very nose of the policeman at the corner," (28) reproduces newspaper warnings of the dangers of harbouring European anarchists in England.

The power of X's insidious propaganda in "The Informer" is reflected in the persuasiveness of the revolutionary dogma that initiates Paul's fall in "An Anarchist" from his law-abiding existence. Convinced that "the world - in his own words -- seemed a very good place to live in" (9), Paul's contentedness is suddenly punctured by the words of an anarchist stranger:

> Gloomy ideas -- *des idées noires* -- rushed into his head. All the world outside the cafe appeared to him as a dismal evil place where a multitude of poor wretches had to work and slave to the sole end that a few individuals should ride in carriages and live notoriously in palaces. He became ashamed of his happiness. (9-10)

The circumstances of Paul's conversion to anarchism have a distinctly cautionary tone: having performed his military service and flourished in his trade, he abandons his dreams of "setting up for himself by and by and of getting married" (9) in a moment of drunken weakness that initiates his downward spiral through anarchism to imprisonment to his final entrapment on the cattle estate.

Appropriate to this moralizing atmosphere, the form that anarchism takes is that of dangerously uncontainable criminality. Paul's first act as an anarchist is to help rob a bank, for which he is deported; he reaches the B.O.S. estate after a violent jailbreak that leaves the warders dead and concludes in a massacre. His final fate, though it evokes sympathy from the narrator, obeys a cautionary logic: anarchists receive just retribution for their moral slippage only by being caged like animals. Thus "An Anarchist" can be read as the confessions of an anarchist that combines stern condemnation with a prurient fascination with the internal workings of political radicalism.

The Secret Agent offers a sharp contrast to the distinct danger represented by anarchism in the short stories. The relationship of the novel to "The Informer" and "An Anarchist" is foregrounded ironically by Verloc's amazement at Vladimir's ignorance of the anarchist movement:

> He confounded causes with effects more than was excusable; the most distinguished propagandists with

> impulsive bomb throwers; assumed organisation where in the nature of things it could not exist; spoke of the social revolutionary party one moment as of a perfectly disciplined army, where the word of chiefs was supreme, and at another as if it had been the loosest association of desperate brigands that ever camped in a mountain gorge. (28)

In fact, the revolutionists in Verloc's parlour are neither soldiers nor brigands, but social parasites incapable of even destructive action. *The Secret Agent* here constructs the non-violent nature of British anarchism negatively, under the category of ineptitude and laziness. Verloc, a character "temperamentally identical with his associates" thus recognizes the truth of their motivation:

> The majority of revolutionists are the enemies of discipline and fatigue mostly. There are natures, too, to whose sense of justice the price exacted looms up monstrously enormous, odious, oppressive, worrying, humiliating, extortionate, intolerable. Those are the fanatics. The remaining portion of social rebels is accounted for by vanity ... (45)

The novel's thesis that revolutionaries are shams and parasites is individualized through its deployment of certain elements of anarchist typology. The portrayal of Ossipon, for example, whose advocacy of Lombrosian criminology reflects ironically back on himself can be read

as intertextual with stereotypes of anarchism's scientific claims. More explicitly, Yundt's rantings suggest the fanatical pan-destructiveness advocated by Fawcett's Hartmann:

> I have always dreamed ... of a band of men absolute in their resolve to discard all scruples in the choice of means, strong enough to give themselves frankly the name of destroyers, and free from the taint of that resigned pessimism which rots the world. No pity for anything on earth, including themselves -- and death -- enlisted for good and all in the service of humanity ... (74)

Along with these instances of anarchist typology, another intertext determining the novel's construction of anarchism is that of Nietzschean thought, or, more specifically the constructions of that thought in British Edwardian culture. *The Secret Agent*'s dialogue with Nietzsche is complex and ambivalent as I hope to show in the following pages. Although it acknowledges the terrifying vision of existence articulated in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the novel rejects what its own culturally legitimized misreading of Nietzsche sees as the celebration of this vision in *The Birth of Tragedy* and elsewhere.

Recent criticism has begun to take account more fully of Conrad's relationship to Nietzsche in general, and of the relevance of this relationship to *The Secret Agent* in

particular. Edward Said claims that the Professor has "superficial resemblances" to "what is often referred to as the extreme nihilism of Nietzsche's philosophy," (65) but does not account for the novel's more complex engagement with Nietzschean ideas, or with the Professor as a symbol of that engagement. Said's tentativeness on this issue may in part be due to the apparent discrepancy between the novel's political themes and the scorn voiced by Nietzsche on repeated occasions for all things political; or it may be attributable to difficulties in providing proof, apart from a few scattered remarks in Conrad's correspondence, of his having read Nietzsche in any detail. Conrad was notoriously disingenuous about his sources and inspirations, however, and as Lee Whitehead shows in his analysis of the influence of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) on *Heart of Darkness*, such proof is not necessary, since Nietzschean thought was very much in the intellectual air of Britain at the time.

We do not need, in fact, to prove any direct familiarity on Conrad's part with Nietzsche's writings to suggest a Nietzschean structure to his conception of existence. J. Hillis Miller in *Poets of Reality* hints at such a similarity, through his use of such terms as Apollonian and Dionysiac in his discussion of the meaning of darkness imagery in Conrad (29, 31). Most recently, moreover, George Butte has argued that "*The Secret Agent* ... betrays a close knowledge of Nietzsche's *The Birth of*

Tragedy" (155). Butte's case, as he says, "is not grounded in any one conclusive linkage, but in an accumulation of probabilities, circumstantial and textual" (155).

My argument here is based in part on the evidence of Conrad's apparent knowledge of Nietzsche, but more fundamentally on the novel's engagement with Nietzsche as an intertext mediated by its reception in British culture. In what follows I wish to indicate some of the ways in which the construction of anarchism in *The Secret Agent* engages with Nietzsche's thought on a number of points, from the Dionysian conception of life first advanced in *The Birth of Tragedy* to the critique of ascetic morality fully developed in such later works as *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887).

Conrad's attitude to Nietzsche in his letters is tellingly divided. In a letter to Helen Sanderson (22 July 1899), for example, he attacks the "mad individualism of Niet[z]sche" (2:188). In the previous year (22 November 1898) he similarly praises Max Nordau's *Degeneration* which contains a virulent attack on Nietzsche (2:121). In a letter of the same period (26 October 1899), however, he reacts positively to Edward Garnett's sympathetic review of Nietzsche's thought published in an 1898 issue of *The Outlook*. To Garnett's contention that "Nietzsche is undoubtedly the deepest, though most biassed psychologist of human institutions that our century has seen" (747) Conrad responds that "You have stirred some brains! I don't think

there is anything wrong with *your* wits" (2:209), and ten years later he solemnly thanks J.G. Huneker for including him with Nietzsche, as well as numerous other authors condemned by Nordau, in Huneker's *Egoists: A Book of Supermen* (4:217).

Conrad's only explicit public mention of Nietzsche is in his essay "The Crime Of Partition" (1918), which participates in anti-German sentiment during the First World War. This attack is launched from the opposite quarter than his previous criticism, condemning Nietzsche not for mad individualism, but for inspiring rampant nationalism:

> The Germanic Tribes had told the whole world in all possible tones carrying conviction, the gently persuasive, the coldly logical, in tones Hegelian, Nietzschean, war-like, pious, cynical, inspired, what they were going to do to the inferior races of the earth, so full of sin and all unworthiness. (124-25)

This comment is at odds with the terms of Conrad's earlier denunciation, and suggests the possibility of a conscious distortion of his subject matter for the sake of his wartime audience; the possibility of such a distortion would increase especially if Conrad had read Nietzsche, since Nietzsche's individualism, referred to by Conrad nineteen years earlier, is based on a contempt for all things German, and quickly supplants in his subsequent works the

nationalistic longings of his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nevertheless, we can note here in anticipation of later comments that the combination of the apparently disparate qualities of individualism and militarism resembles a similar conflation in cultural constructions of anarchism at the time.

In a letter to Ford Madox Ford discussing the recently published *The Inheritors*, upon which they had collaborated, Conrad hints at a more fully elaborated attitude to Nietzsche, one which, I would argue, is complexly delineated in *The Secret Agent*. Of *The Inheritors*'s Fourth Dimensionists he writes, "That's what Niet[z]sche's phil[osophy] leads to -- here's your overman" (2:344). The Dimensionists, one of their representatives tells the narrator of *The Inheritors*, stand for "the Inevitable, for the future that goes on its way," while humanity is "the past that lies by the roadside," (320) a past afflicted by "beliefs, traditions; fears; ideals of pity ... of love," in which humanity "grew luxurious in the worship of ... ideals ..." (12-13). In the impending Dimensionist takeover, in which he is unwittingly complicit, the narrator is told that humans "should be treated as we ourselves treat the inferior races," in such a way that "our whole social system -- would break as a beam snaps, because we were worm-eaten with altruism and ethics" (17).

As Conrad's letter to Ford suggests, The Dimensionists illustrate a scepticism toward the image of the *ubermensch* advanced by Nietzsche as a panacea to the reign of ideals, both moral and scientific, that Nietzsche sees as the sickness of the nineteenth century. In *The Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche describes this man of the future:

> ... some day, in a stronger age than this decaying, self-doubting present, he must come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt ... This man of the future, who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism; this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this Antichrist and antinihilist; this victor over God and nothingness ... (532)

Like the Dimensionists, the *ubermensch* represents a movement beyond man, by way of a "sublime wickedness" (532) and contempt for conventional morality, with respect to which man will appear as one of the "inferior races". Conrad and Ford, however, have the destiny of the Dimensionists fulfil itself in the form of an even greater nothingness than that against which the *ubermensch* fights: annihilating conventional morality, they inaugurate a nihilistic reign of pure conquest and desolation.

The construction of the anarchism of the Professor in *The Secret Agent* connects with this critique of the *ubermensch* in *The Inheritors*. At the end of *The Secret Agent*, for example, the Professor exhorts Ossipon to, "drink and be merry, for we are strong, and to-morrow we die," (226) thus echoing the epigraph to *The Inheritors*: "Sardanapalus builded seven cities in a day./ Let us eat, drink and sleep, for to-mmorow [*sic*] we die". The force of these words, which indicate the Professor's *ubermenschian* exaltation of his own power in the face of death, is undercut by the context in which they appear. This context, the Silenus Restaurant where he converses with Ossipon, is itself Nietzschean, referring to a crucial passage at the beginning of *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which Nietzsche recounts an ancient story about Midas's pursuit of "the wise Silenus":

> When Silenus at last fell into his hands, the king asked what was the best and most desirable of all things for man. Fixed and immovable, the demigod said not a word, till at last, urged by the king, he gave a shrill laugh and broke out into these words: "Oh wretched, ephemeral race, children of chance and misery, why do you compel me to tell you what it would be most expedient for you not to hear? What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not

> to *be*, to be *nothing*. But the second best for you is -- to die soon." (42)

As Butte demonstrates, Nietzsche is by far the most likely source for this pessimistic variant of the Silenus story, which appears originally in an obscure corner of Plutarch's *Moralia*, and which is supplanted by a more positive version in nineteenth-century English books on classical mythology (159-62). Nietzsche's version also accounts for the novel's ironic comparison of the cabman to "Virgil's Silenus" (128); Virgil's cheerfully bucolic version of the myth is clearly undercut in this passage, which represents "an emptying of the Sixth Eclogue in order to revise Virgil into Nietzsche" (Butte 164).

Butte's confirmation of Nietzsche as the most likely intertext for *The Secret Agent*'s mention of the Silenus myth has considerable significance for the novel's construction of anarchism. In addition to being a parody of the other Nietzschean element of the *ubermensch*, the construction of the anarchist Professor can be read as an ironic reference to Nietzsche's theory of the origin of classical tragedy which centres upon the truth of Silenian wisdom. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, tragedy is seen as developing out of Dionysian rituals in which revellers realize the terrible wisdom of Silenus, the awareness that life is based on nothingness; they are compensated for this knowledge, however, by their momentary absorption into the mysterious

heart of the world in which their individuality is annihilated. The rite is therefore an ecstatic experience of both pain and pleasure, in which "the horror and absurdity of [human] existence" (60) is revealed.

In Conrad, on the other hand, this exultation is parodied in the locale with which the Professor is associated, the Silenus Restaurant, a dingy subterranean beer hall where Dionysian ecstasy is reduced to cheap decoration:

> ... the fresco paintings ran flat and dull all round the walls without windows, representing scenes of the chase and of outdoor revelry in mediaeval costumes. Varlets in green jerkins brandished hunting knives and raised on high tankards of foaming beer. (52)

For Nietzsche, tragedy is informed by the spirit of music, the art form superior to all others in its ability to evoke the surging truth of the "primal unity" at the centre of things (49). At the Silenus Restaurant, however, this primordial power of music is parodied by the dissonance of a mechanical piano that is associated with cheap nationalism:

> ... An upright semi-grand piano near the door, flanked by two palms in pots, executed suddenly all by itself a valse tune with aggressive virtuosity. The din it raised was deafening (88) ... [it] struck a few chords courageously, and beginning a selection of national

> airs, played [the Professor] out at last to the tune of "The Blue Bells of Scotland." (65)

Within this environment, the Professor preaches a version of the will to power in which he shuns conventional morality as "the hope of the weak, whose theology has invented hell for the strong" (227). Here he echoes Nietzsche's critique of Christianity as an instance of slave-morality, the worship of a system of spiritual values on the part of the physically weak as a defence against, and later as a revenge upon, the strong. He thus identifies the haplessly gentle Michaelis as a member of the group that is the "source of all evil":

> They are our sinister masters -- the weak, the flabby, the silly, the cowardly, the faint of heart, and the slavish of mind ... First the great multitude of the weak must go, then the only relatively strong. You see? First the blind, then the deaf and the dumb, then the halt and the lame -- and so on. Every taint, every vice, every prejudice, every convention must meet its doom (226)

The Professor's *ubermenschian* certainty of his own superiority, however, is undermined by his own sickly physical appearance, his "flat, large ears," his skull "which looked frail enough for Ossipon to crush between thumb and forefinger," his "unhealthy complexion," and the "lamentable inferiority of the whole physique" which is

"made ludicrous by the supremely self-confident bearing of the individual" (52).

The Professor's parodic status introduces a number of complexities into the subject of the novel's relation to Nietzsche, not the least of which is the conflict between this status and Nietzsche's scorn, exhibited throughout his work, for democratic movements, especially socialism and anarchism. In *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), for example, Nietzsche commands his reader to

> witness the ever madder howling of the anarchist dogs who are baring their fangs more and more obviously and roam through the alleys of European culture. They seem opposites of ... the doltish philosophasters and brotherhood enthusiasts who call themselves socialists and want a "free society"; but in fact they are at one with the lot in their thorough and instinctive hostility to very other form of society except that of the *autonomous* herd ... (306)

As far as certain anarchists were concerned, this hostility was mutual. Kropotkin, who complained of the epicurean, Nietzschean state of British anarchism, distanced himself as far as possible from what he called the *individualismus Nietzscheanum*:

> It is the individualism of the bourgeois who can exist only on condition of the oppression of the

> masses and lackeyism, of the servility towards tradition, of the obliteration of individuality in the oppressor himself, as well as in the oppressed mass. The "beautiful blond beast" [the *ubermensch*] is, fundamentally, a slave -- a slave to his kind, to the priest, to the law, to tradition -- a cipher without individuality in the exploiting herd. (quote in Woodcock *Anarchist Prince* 281)

If Conrad does confuse Nietzschean individuality with anarchism, however, he is not entirely alone, for while Nietzsche and anarchism were busy denouncing each other, much of the initial reaction to Nietzsche in Britain identified them. As David Thatcher suggests, (25-29) the negativity of this reaction was in part due to the preconditioning of public opinion by two factors. The first of these was Nordau's attack on Nietzsche in *Degeneration* (1895). Including it in a section of the book entitled "Ego-Mania", Nordau condemns Nietzsche's work as the ravings of a madman,

> a series of constantly reiterated delirious ideas, having their source in illusions of sense and diseased organic processes ... bellowing insanity, rambling far beyond the range of rational examination and refutation. (416-17)

He associates this lunacy with anarchism and free-thinking:

> Besides anarchists, born with incapacity for adaptation, [Nietzsche's] "individualism," i.e., his insane ego-mania, for which the external world is non-existent, was bound to attract those who instinctively feel that at the present day the State encroaches too deeply and too violently on the rights of the individual ... These thirsters for freedom believe that they have found in Nietzsche the spokesman of their healthy revolt against the State, [but] ... They commit the error ... that the individual, for whom he demands perfect freedom, is the man, not of knowledge and judgement, but of blind craving, requiring the satisfaction of his lascivious instincts at any price ... (471)

The second factor influencing the reception of Nietzsche in Britain was Alexander Tille's enthusiastic introductions to the first English translations of Nietzsche's works. These essays claimed that the true Englishman demonstrated Nietzsche's master-slave thesis in that while he "speaks more of the Jewish-Christian code ... he acts more upon the Germanic-aristocratic code which survives in his gentleman-morality" (*Genealogy* trans. Haussman xiii). It is in his introduction to his own translation of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* that Tille, like Nordau but with opposing sympathies, finds analogues for

Nietzsche's overman in Bakunin and the proto-anarchist Max Stirner (xviii).

Foe and disciple, then, connected Nietzsche with anarchism, and the reviewers followed suit. William Barry, for example, in articles he published in the *Quarterly Review* (1897) and the *English Illustrated Magazine* (1901) called Nietzsche the "anarchist *par excellence*," ("Ideals" 318) whose "Bible, or Epic of Anarchism" was *Zarathustra* ("Anarchy" 190); he is a "European" anarchist, as opposed to the "effeminate" French variety, in the unscrupulous tradition of "Napoleon, Caesar Borgia ... Peter the Great, or a South American Dictator -- incarnate force and no conscience" (191); moreover, he is, more than self-described anarchist thinkers, the truest, most energetic voice of anarchism:

> To him the Church seems an effete superstition, the State mere tyranny, metaphysics the ghost of religion sitting upon its grave, morality a bugbear, law the enemy of life, and everything permissible so long as men please themselves.
>
> This Great Charter ... finds in Nietzsche such a wealth of light and colour ... that none can marvel if the anarchists of all nations flock to his standard. What, in comparison with his laughing, singing, and dancing strophes are the pale arguments of a Max Stirner, the rants and

> furies of Bakunin, the geographical lectures of Prince Kropotkin ...? ("Ideals" 299-300)

More prominent literary figures also made this connection. In *The Perfect Wagnerite*, for example, Shaw described the character of Siegfried as "a totally unmoral person, a born anarchist, the ideal of Bakoonin, [*sic*] an anticipation of the 'overman' of Nietzsche" (200).

The prevalence of this connection indicates that Conrad was by no means alone in associating Nietzsche with anarchism, and suggests the extent to which his own reception of Nietzschean ideas may have been mediated by a larger cultural attitude that saw Nietzsche as an anarchist. Conrad's association of the two in the character of the Professor, therefore, may unwittingly mock the anti-anarchist bias of Nietzsche's thought; it can also be read, however, as an attempt to disguise what in some respects are similarities between himself and Nietzsche on certain issues central to the novel.

Such similarities emerge in the shared contempt of both writers for socialism: thus Conrad would seem to agree with Nietzsche when he has the Professor utter Bakunin's slogan -- "My device is: No God! No master", he says (227) -- that Nietzsche explicitly derides in *Beyond Good And Evil* (306). These similarities of opinion may have been more strongly felt by Conrad through his awareness of personal similarities with Nietzsche that he could have read about in

many of the British accounts of Nietzsche's thought, including Andrew Seth Pringle Pattison's article in the October 1897 issue of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Nietzsche's ancestry was supposedly Polish, and he attributed his sense of being a stranger in Germany to his native blood, just as Conrad continually wrestled with his status as a Polish foreigner in Britain. Nietzsche, like Conrad, was only five when his father died and, like Conrad, he was plagued by debilitating physical ailments and by depression. Whether Conrad felt such a personal affinity or not, however, the similarities between the two writers' attitudes toward anarchism -- or at least between their understanding of what anarchism was -- is more than superficial. In fact, what we find is that *The Secret Agent*'s rejection of the *ubermensch* does not preclude its agreement with Nietzsche's critique of ascetic morality, and as such suggests an ambivalence in its construction of the Professor's role in the novel.

At the beginning of "The Informer", Conrad's narrator, reflecting on the fanatical nature of anarchist belief, remarks,

> I am sure that if such a faith (or such a fanaticism) once mastered my thoughts I would never be able to compose myself sufficiently to sleep or eat or perform any of the routine acts of daily life. (75)

These comments about the incompatibility of anarchism and mundane existence align with the critique of ascetic ideals

found in *The Genealogy of Morals*, as well as with *The Secret Agent*'s construction of anarchists. For Nietzsche, modern life is infested, in a Conradian phrase, with "sham idealism" (*Genealogy* 395). The worship of such ideals, which he views as transcendent abstractions, is asceticism, a denial of life exemplified by the "contemplative man", who is both the priest and the philosopher (552): "The idea at issue here is the *valuation* the ascetic priest places on our life: he juxtaposes it ... with a quite different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes" (553). This other mode of existence, asceticism, is characterized by, among other things, a tendency to proselytizing:

> The ascetic treats life as a wrong road on which one must finally walk back to the point where it begins, or as a mistake that is put right by deeds -- that we *ought* to put right: for he *demands* that one go along with him; where he can he compels acceptance of *his* evaluation of existence. (553)

Ascetic ideals are themselves products of what Nietzsche calls *ressentiment*, the process not unlike sublimation referred to above by which the weak of society expound a "slave morality," (472) or set of values hostile to those of society's masters, the strong. Promoting over time a general acceptance of this morality allows the weak to exact revenge for their former subordination. Ascetic ideals --

like ideals in general -- represent a metaphysical extension of the Nietzschean will to power:

> The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge. (472)

To varying degrees, *The Secret Agent* illustrates Nietzsche's contention that "presuming [one] would like to study *ressentiment* close up for once, I would say: this plant blooms best today among anarchists ..." (509). All the anarchists in the novel proselytize their doctrines clamorously. In Nietzschean fashion, furthermore, Conrad constructs anarchism as a form of fanatical asceticism motivated by an egotism that masks itself behind ideals. Like Nietzsche's ascetic philosopher, the anarchists of *The Secret Agent* advocate sterile ideals absurdly removed from the world. Ossipon, "nicknamed the Doctor" (40), proclaims a belief in science which, as we have seen, reflects ironically back on himself, and, as I noted earlier, is identified with fetishism. As such it can be read through *The Genealogy of Morals* as a form of religious ideal:

> ... science and the ascetic ideal, both rest on the same foundation ... on the overestimation of truth (589) ... Since Copernicus, man seems to have got himself on an inclined plane -- now he is slipping

> faster and faster away from the centre into -- what? into nothingness? into a "*penetrating* sense of his nothingness"? Very well! hasn't this been the straightest route to -- the *old* ideal? (591)

Science -- specifically astronomy, the target of the bomb attack in the novel -- in its increasingly alienating awareness of the cosmic triviality of humanity, thus culminates in a vision of the nothingness of existence that is identical to the vision of religious asceticism which devalues human life by constructing it as infinitely distant from a religious ideal.

As a disciple of science Ossipon conforms to this model of asceticism in his vision of a priesthood of doctors who will master the future: "In two hundred years doctors will rule the world. Science reigns already. It reigns in the shade maybe -- but it reigns" (227). As we have seen, however, Ossipon's views are empty deterministic rhetoric that in addition to removing him from the responsibility of action are assets in his seductions of women, and thereby appease his egotism.

Michaelis's idealism, based like Ossipon's on a version of science, is satirized in more explicitly religious terms that appeal to cultural construction of the milk-and-water, vegetarian anarchist noted in Chapter One:

> At a wormeaten oak table ... Michaelis was writing night and day in a shaky, slanting hand that

> "Autobiography of a Prisoner" which was to be like a book of Revelation in the history of mankind (94) ... [he] pursued his idea -- *the* idea of his solitary reclusion -- the thought vouchsafed to his captivity and growing like a faith revealed in visions. (39) ... He has divided his biography into three parts, entitled "Faith, Hope, Charity" ... He sat in that tiny cage in a litter of manuscript. There was half-eaten raw carrot on the table near him. His breakfast. He lives on a diet of raw carrots and a little milk now. (225)

Michaelis's hermitic, visionary reclusiveness -- a parody of his first words in the novel, "... All idealization makes life poorer" (37) -- is ascetic down to the denial of the body represented by his diet. The source of this asceticism is, once again, egotism intensified here to the point of an insane solipsism: Michaelis

> talked to himself, indifferent to the sympathy or hostility of his hearers, indifferent to their presence, from the habit he had of thinking aloud hopefully in the solitude of the four white washed walls of his cell. (39)

It is not surprising therefore, to find the Professor, in his capacity as a parody of the *ubermensch*, scorning Michaelis's religious utopianism in Nietzschean terms. "He is elaborating now the idea of a world planned out like an immense and nice hospital", he says, "with gardens and

flowers, in which the strong are to devote themselves to the nursing of the weak" (225). This criticism corresponds to Nietzsche's attack on the "morality of pity" (*Genealogy* 455) and his warning that

> the *sick* are man's greatest danger (558)... this requires above all that the healthy should be *segregated* from the sick, guarded even from the sight of the sick, that they may not confound themselves with the sick. (560)

The complex direction of this satire nevertheless marks the ambivalence of Conrad's engagement with Nietzsche. If the Professor is a parody of Nietzsche, he also articulates a Nietzschean critique of the dangers of the weak that the novel implicitly supports, in the cases of both Michaelis, attacked by the Professor without contradiction from any other source, and Stevie, whose psychological degeneracy makes him prone to acts of violence in response to a hyperdeveloped sense of injustice. As Martin Ray observes, (128-29) Stevie is similar to the Professor according to Nordau's standards of physical and mental degeneracy.

Indeed, the Professor's physical weakness, noted earlier can be read as just one element in *The Secret Agent*'s critique of the *übermensch* as itself constituting a version of the ascetic ideal. We can note in this respect that the Professor's metaphysical allegiance with death reverses the valuation of strong and weak -- as life- and

death-affirming respectively -- assigned by Nietzsche. Moreover, his is the character in the novel whose beliefs are most clearly described in terms of *ressentiment*:

> The extreme, almost ascetic purity of his thought, combined with an astounding ignorance of worldly conditions, had set before him a goal of power and prestige to be attained without medium of arts, graces, tact, wealth ... (66)

In addition to being motivated by a "vengeful bitterness," this will to "power and personal prestige," is associated through his father, "an itinerant and rousing preacher of some obscure but rigid Christian sect," (66) with Christianity, the apotheosis, according to Nietzsche (*Genealogy* 471) of the *ressentiment par excellence* represented by Judaism (439). In the Professor, furthermore, Christian asceticism is connected to the fetishized ideal of science that links the entire corrupt edifice of society:

> In the son, individualist by temperament, once the science of colleges had replaced thoroughly the faith of conventicles, this moral attitude translated itself into a frenzied puritanism of ambition. He nursed it as something secularly holy. (66)

The disappearance of the Professor into "the street full of men" (231) in the last sentence of the novel can thus be read as the disappearance, in Nietzsche's terms, of an

anarchist dog into the mass of the "*autonomous* herd." Ironically, Conrad agrees here with Kropotkin's critique of Nietzsche.

The self-reflexive ironies of the Professor's condemnations indicate the point of *The Secret Agent*'s metaphysical rejection of anarchism, which it sees as a nihilistic embracing of nothingness and death. This nothingness and death is precisely what the novel recognizes as being at the heart of existence in its telling of the fate of the Verloc family, all of whom are wiped out in the course of a single day. We can note in this respect Conrad's cryptic remark in the Author's Note that "there have been moments during the writing of the book when I was an extreme revolutionist," (8) as well as the novel's oblique recognition in its description of Stevie drawing, of Nordau's claim that artists, like anarchists, are degenerates (Ray 129-30).

Nothingness and death are symbolized, also, by the omnipresent imagery of darkness which, in the words of Hillis Miller is "what remains, horrifyingly, when every thing or colour has disappeared," (25) and which makes itself felt in countless places: in Verloc's fear of the dark; in the obscurity into which his shop seems to disappear as it is approached by the Assistant Commissioner; in the veil across Winnie's murderous face and the darkness of the Channel into which she disappears; in the image of

the light-devouring city in the Author's Note; and in the epistemological darkness at the centre of the novel in which the explosion occurs. In this way, *The Secret Agent* acknowledges Nietzsche's Silenian realization of the terrifying, nihilistic truth at the heart of the world and comes close to the Professor's recognition of the supremacy of death.

The Secret Agent resembles *Heart of Darkness* in that each novel retreats from the extreme utterances -- "Exterminate, exterminate!" (226) in the Professor's case, "Exterminate all the brutes" in Kurtz's (51) -- of a principal character. By exposing his motivation as mere *ressentiment*, *The Secret Agent* rejects the ascetic idealization of nothingness that anarchism represents; in doing so it valorizes life, thereby justifying the "fundamentally criminal" nature of society (*Letters* 2:160). Conrad's vision, in fact, opposes Godwin's anarchist convictions in its acceptance of the "brute engine" of government, and indeed the part of the universal "knitting machine" (*Letters* 1:425) that is life, over the nothingness of death that is its alternative and for which anarchism speaks.

The identification of anarchism in *The Secret Agent* with nothingness and death involves more than the metaphysical, however. These negative valuations of anarchism, I believe, are implicitly politicized in the

novel in a way that brings its ideology into line with that of British imperialism in the period before World War One. Crucial here is *The Secret Agent*'s implicit politicization of its metaphysical critique, its assertion that what it sees as Nietzschean values have specific political ramifications. The metaphysical in the novel is not opposed to the political but is bound up with it to the extent that *The Secret Agent*'s attitude to Nietzsche aligns with its construction of anarchism as one form of widespread social weakness, a vulnerability that increases the threat to society represented by foreign imperialism. The novel's politicization of its metaphysical critique of anarchism allows it to construct anarchism as a form of weakness and degeneracy which is at the same time a danger to the nation. The fact that the Professor provides explosives for Vladimir's plot and that the attack on the Observatory goes pathetically wrong suggest anarchism to be at once inept *and* potentially dangerous; the fact that the bomb plot is not motivated by anarchist doctrines shows the flimsy ineffectiveness of those doctrines while simultaneously suggesting anarchist activity to be a mask for foreign imperialism. In the convergence of the opposing qualities of ineptitude and danger can be read traces of similar contradictions that can be found in anarchist typology, contradictions that indicate cultural anxieties about anarchism that are shared by *The Secret Agent*.

In his article "Some Other Secrets in *The Secret Agent*," Graham McMaster suggests a way to begin understanding the political subtext of *The Secret Agent*. McMaster argues that the novel is determined by a liberal imperialism that rejects the more horrendous manifestations of colonialism, as exemplified, for example, by Belgium in *Heart of Darkness*, precisely in order to defend the empire as an institution that "came about by accident [as] the result of unavoidable accidents on the periphery" (234). This was a version of imperialism which J. Guinness Rogers, in the December 1899 issue of *The Contemporary Review*, described as

> an Imperialism which cares only for the safety and does not desire the extension of the Empire, to which the policy of land-grabbing is intensely offensive, which regards war as an evil to be avoided at all costs except that of honour or of Imperial safety, [and] is in essence not only different from , but distinctly opposed to that braggart and vulgar Jingoism which calls forth the loud applause of music-halls ... (900-1)

To this end McMaster invokes the novel's opposition of Sir Ethelred, a figure of the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, to that of "the Cheeseman", the leader of a "reactionary gang" (113) who corresponds, he suggests, to the fervent imperialist Joseph Chamberlain. In addition to

being an anti-dynamiter, Harcourt was an avid free-trader, "opposed to Chamberlain's drive for imperial expansion" (McMaster 235). McMaster's argument finds support, I would suggest, in the fact that Sir Ethelred -- despite the irony with which he, like every other character in the novel is treated -- is associated symbolically with a concept of Englishness that evokes positive heroic notions of empire:

> ... the unbroken record of that man's descent surpassed in the number of centuries the age of the oldest oak in the country ... The great Personage might have been the statue of one of his own princely ancestors stripped of a crusader's war harness, and put into an ill fitting frock coat. (106-7)

The capacity of his deputy, the Assistant Commissioner, to discover the truth of the bombing where no one else can, furthermore, is linked explicitly to his abilities as a colonial policeman and to "his own crusading instincts" (168).

In this respect, McMaster asserts that the symbolic banning of Vladimir from the Explorer's Club, "a building of noble proportions and hospitable aspect," (172) at the end of *The Secret Agent* symbolizes the expulsion of a hostile European imperialism by the ideology of 'natural' or friendly empire articulated by the novel. The difference between these two notions of empire is crucial for the justification of this expulsion, since it is the moral

superiority of British imperialism which allows that represented by Vladimir to be regarded as a threat rightly exposed. I would suggest, in this respect, that *The Secret Agent*, as its title suggests, participates, however obliquely or ironically, in the proliferation of espionage and invasion narratives that as Samuel Hynes notes, occurred in the Edwardian period and indicated cultural anxieties about the possibility of foreign incursion (34-35). McMaster is thus correct when he asserts that "*The Secret Agent* can be regarded as one of the first blows struck in the propaganda war which was to represent Germans as ferocious if technological savages for the next forty years or so;" (232) in doing so, however, he misses the point that this construction of Germanness was current in British culture both implicity and explicitly in the decades before *The Secret Agent* was published and that it was routinely associated with anarchism.

An objection to this claim for an anti-German subtext for the novel is the traditional assumption that the unnamed imperial power represented by Vladimir is not Germany but Russia.[4] McMaster responds to this argument by noting that while Conrad's inclinations were rabidly anti-Russian, certain clues as to the identity of the embassy Verloc visits at the beginning of the novel sugges' it to be other than Russian. He observes, for example, that Vladimir's name is pan-Slavic, rather than exclusively Russian, and

mentions the fact that Slavs held high positions in the Austrian government (230).[5] Furthermore, the names of Vladimir's predecessor and colleague, Stott-Wartenheimer and Wurmt are undeniably Teutonic sounding (230). The embassy thus has Germanic, and probably Austrian, association, as well as a Slavic one; McMaster, accordingly, reads this as a sign of the triple imperial threat posed by Germany, Austria and Russia, the partitioners of Poland, a threat symbolized in the novel by the triangle that is Verloc's code-sign.

Of these triple allies, it was Germany that Conrad acknowledged as the greatest threat to Europe in the year preceding the writing of *The Secret Agent*. In "Autocracy and War," (1905) for example, after noting the eclipse of Russian imperialism by its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, Conrad warns that now

> The German eagle with a Prussian head looks all round the horizon not so much for something to do that would count for good in the records of the earth, as simply for something good to get ... He gazes north and south, and east and west ... The disappearance of the Russian phantom has given a foreboding of unwonted freedom to the *Welt-politik*. According to the national tendency this assumption of Imperial impulses would run into the grotesque were it not for the spikes of the pickel-

haubes peeping out grimly from behind ... "*Le Prussianisme -- voilà l'ennemi!*" (113-14)

McMaster's reading is persuasive, though I think limited to the fear of foreign threat implicit in the novel. I wish here to expand upon it, and to offer another interpretation of the enigmatic triangle that identifies Verloc, one that takes into account other threats to the nation that are implicitly articulated in the novel. Certainly, the foreign threat noted by McMaster is present in numerous forms. There is the foreign identity of Verloc, as well as the "denationalized" and "unplaced" Italians with whom the Assistant Commissioner dines on his foray into the "jungle" of London in search of the latter (115-16). These epithets suggest the dangerous national mobility represented by anarchism noted in Chapter One, and indeed many of the anarchists of the novel, as we have noted, have themselves foreign sounding names. Of these, Yundt, the one with the German name, and the Professor, the one with the Germanic associations through his parodic connection with Nietzsche that I have noted, espouse the most violent forms of anarchism.

By supplying explosives to Verloc, the Professor, is complicit in the bombing, which is masterminded by an imperial power highly suggestive of Germany. In this respect, I would argue that anarchism is affiliated most strongly with German imperialism both symbolically and

instrumentally in terms of the plot; this contention agrees, furthermore, with both the linking of Nietzsche with German militarism in "The Crime of Partition," and with the Professor's association with national airs played by the piano in the Silenus Restaurant. The fanaticism represented by the Professor is thus politicized by its association with German barbarism and militancy, as in much of popular anarchist typology, where anarchist politics simply conceal the invasive agenda of foreign imperialism.

The threat implied by this connection corresponds to the intensity of grotesque caricature devoted to anarchists in the novel. In his discussion of Conrad's next work, *Under Western Eyes*, Terry Eagleton observes that this novel's "official thesis of 'neutrality', disparaging both [autocrats and revolutionaries] alike, is in practice dominated by a second attitude: its anti-revolutionary bias" (*Exiles* 25). A similar claim can be made about *The Secret Agent*. While the characters of the novel are ostensibly "locked interdependently together in the same grotesque game," (23) the terms in which the anarchists are described differ markedly from those reserved for other members of the social hierarchy. Michaelis's Lady Patroness, Sir Ethelred and Heat are treated with a bemused irony, for example, while Verloc oscillates between haplessness and repugnance and Vladimir exudes a ruthlessness appropriate to the representative of a foreign power. The fierce satirizing of

the anarchists in Verloc's parlour, however, is disproportionate to the treatment of these other characters, while in emphasizing the cynicism avowed by Conrad in the Author's Note it belies the objectivity which he claims that cynicism provides.

The descriptions of the revolutionists in the novel, in fact, reveals an anti-anarchist bias that compares with its fear of foreign imperialism, signified by the bomb-plot. The repugnance with which the narrative treats the anarchists, furthermore, provides a direction in which to look for the third corner of this triangle of anxiety. The political hostilities of *The Secret Agent* are represented along an axis of signification that runs from explicit danger to repugnance. This axis crosses from the level of plot to that of description, Vladimir and the bombing signifying danger at the level of the plot, and the anarchists -- through the Professor's role in the explosion and their caricatured portrayals -- straddling the two extremes. At the opposite end of this axis, posing no explicit danger in terms of the plot, but described in terms whose repellency belies a considerable anxiety on the part of the novel, are representatives of the lower classes, notably the cabman and the Verloc's charwoman, Mrs Neale. The latter, like the former who has "my missus and four kids at 'ome," (128) is associated with unchecked biological

reproduction, and is described in terms that recall Milicent Henning's mother but in more repellent detail:

> Victim of her marriage with a debauched joiner, she was oppressed by the needs of many infant children. Red armed, and aproned in coarse sacking up to the armpits, she exhaled the anguish of the poor in a breath of soap-suds and rum, in the uproar of scrubbing, in the clatter of tin-pails. (138)

Besides the anarchists, the lower classes, in the name of whom social revolution would occur, receive the fullest brunt of the novel's scorn. They represent the third member of the triple alliance against which the novel aligns itself. It is significant in this respect that among the characters explicitly identified with death in *The Secret Agent* are Vladimir, whose scheme kills Stevie, the Professor who stands for death, and the cabman, whose "steed of apocalyptic misery" (128) pulls a "Cab of Death" (131). Winnie's killing of Verloc is the eruption of deadly forces from within the enclave of the Verloc family, an enclave that through Verloc's dealings with Vladimir, his spying on the anarchists, and his position as Mrs Neale's employer is associated with each of the groups represented by these characters; hence Verloc's geometrical code-sign, the fact that his shop is located on a street that "branched off ... from the side of an open triangular space," (116) and the

fact that the only legible remains of the Greenwich explosion is the triangular label from Stevie's coat.

The response of the novel to the forms of threat represented by rival imperialism and the lower classes, as well as to anarchism which symbolically binds the two, parallels its metaphysical retreat from the nihilism that the Professor embraces. Narrative closure in *The Secret Agent* takes the form of a compensatory annihilation that eradicates or defuses nearly all traces of foreignness and anarchism from the novel. In the wake of the death of Stevie, a symbol of national degeneracy too easily influenced by foreign and revolutionary ideas, there occurs the death of Verloc, the alien in whose identity the triple threat converges; Winnie, who, although a native must be eradicated in order for the taint of foreignness to be removed; and Ossipon, who is a victim of his own "sham" revolutionary tendencies. The banishment of Vladimir after the uncovering of the plot, and the disappearance of the Professor into the street full of men constitutes a modified form of this purging of dangerous elements, one that in allowing these characters to survive retains a cautionary status that acts as a warning to a nation whose highest official in the novel is named Ethelred, perhaps after The Unready.

Historians of British Edwardian culture note a fear in the period of cultural degeneracy that was suspected of

endangering the nation against foreign invasion. Government responses to this concern included the Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded and the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, in which the sociologist R.B. Rowntree asked rhetorically,

> is it, or is it not true that the whole labouring population of the land are at present living under conditions which make it impossible that they should rear the next generation to be sufficiently virile to supply more than two out of five men effective for the purposes of either peace or war? (quoted in Hynes 22)

Both of these committees directed their attentions primarily to the overpopulated urban slums, which were seen as the prime source of national weakness. Seen as particularly dangerous was the fertility of the mentally and physically degenerate, who, like Conrad's cabman and Mrs Neale, exemplied the problem of what Baden-Powell called "much pauper over-population due to want of self-restraint on the part of men and women" (209).

Linked to this network of cultural anxieties -- poverty, degeneracy, national weakness -- was a concern about the exacerbating influence of socialism. In his popular novel *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), which envisions a German assault on Britain, William Le Queux wrote,

> The whole character of the nation and the Government had changed since the great days when, in the face of

> famine and immense peril, the country had fought Napoleon to the last and overthrown him. The strong aristocratic government had been replaced by a weak Administration swayed by every breath of popular impulse. The peasantry who were the backbone of the nation had vanished, and been replaced by the weak, excitable population of the towns.
>
> Socialism, with its creed of "Thou shalt have no other god but Thyself," and its doctrine, "Let us eat and drink, for to-mmorow we die," had replaced the religious beliefs of a generation of Englishmen taught to suffer and to die sooner than surrender to wrong. In the hour of trial, amidst smoking ruins, among the holocausts of the dead ... the spirit of the nation quailed, and there was really no great leader to recall it to ways of honour and duty. (542)

A similar, if subtler, concern for the weakening influence of socialism on an already "excitable" population, symbolized by the character of Stevie, marks *The Secret Agent*'s construction of anarchism. The Professor, who utters to Ossipon words similar to those that Le Queux attributes to socialism, can thus be read as a symbol not solely of metaphysical death in the abstract, but of one of the factors that, along with lower class degeneracy, invites the form of social death represented by foreign invasion. He thus disappears at the end of the novel into the street

filled with the "mass of men," a mass that is figured in metaphors of mindless proliferation -- "They swarmed numerous like locusts, industrious like ants" (67) -- like a "pest" (231), the social disease of degeneration. Like the other revolutionaries of the novel he is a sham, in truth weak; but it is this contagious, degenerate weakness, which he shares with the young like Stevie, that is anarchism's most dangerous quality in *The Secret Agent*.

Endnotes

[1]Despite his invaluable work in tracking down historical sources, Sherry tends to elide the ways in which *The Secret Agent* generalizes negatively, as Irving Howe puts it, (98) about anarchists. He concedes, it is true, that "in spite of the wealth of information Conrad apparently had about revolutionaries, he chooses those aspects which deny sympathetic response to the reader, and which lead to the presentation of ... extreme type[s]" (285). He is simultaneously complicit in this presentation, however, in his claim that the revolutionary journal in "The Informer" approximates the views of *The Torch* and other anarchist publications in that it "advocated systematic murder" (214). The example he adduces of such an extreme view is an account in the *Commonweal* (24 October 1891) of a worker who stabs several policemen in an effort to escape custody (423-24). The journal's support of the worker's acts, however, does not constitute promoting systematic murder in the Nechaevian sense of ruthless revolutionary terrorism. Similarly, while he suggests militant Fenianism as Conrad's inspiration for a number of the novel's aspects, most notably its portrayal of the Professor, Sherry does not emphasize sufficiently Conrad's imaginative conflation, in the manner of much cultural discourse, of anarchism and Fenianism, nor does he draw sufficient attention to the uniqueness of the Greenwich

Park explosion as the only act of anarchist associated violence to occur in Britain.

[2]Martin Ray, in "Conrad, Nordau and Other Degenerates: The Psychology of *The Secret Agent*", argues convincingly that the characters of *The Secret Agent* are constructed according to the types of mental and physical degeneracy described in Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1895).

[3]The significance of Lombroso for *The Secret Agent* has been remarked on elsewhere. Robert G. Jacobs claims that "a reading of Conrad's novels where sickness and deviation from a social norm appear importantly reveals their evident Lombrosian colouration," and argues that his choice of the unsympathetic Yundt as a critic of Lombroso indicates Conrad's sympathy with Lombrosian criminology. John E. Saveson agrees, arguing that Yundt's attack on Lombroso is "insignificant" since "It is in character," and "adds to the novel's thematic content a minor reservation which believers in Lombroso were usually willing to add also" (61). More recently, Allen Hunter argues that while he is indebted to the criminologist for some of his subject matter, "Conrad sees a more complex character of society than Lombroso" (191). My argument goes further in claiming that *The Secret Agent* constructs Lombroso as a symptom of the widespread degeneration that anarchism exemplifies. None of the other

critics look at Lombroso's references to anarchism in his article in *The Monist*.

[4]Both book-length political studies of Conrad make this assumption. Eloise Knapp Hay, in *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad*, calls Vladimir a "caricature of Russian autocracy" (243), while Avrom Fleishman, in *Conrad's Politics*, claims that he "is Conrad's representation of the essential irrationalism, or barbarism, of Russia" (195).

[5]Professor Reuel Wilson from the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Western Ontario informs me that Vladimir's name is indeed Pan-Slavic, although it is first and not a last name. It thus has an emblematic quality. It is important to recognize that I am not arguing that there is not an implied Russian presence behind the bomb-plot, but that elements of other nationalities, notably Germany, are also implicated in it. In light of "Autocracy and War" -- discussed on this page -- in which the spectre of Russian autocracy is described as having been laid to rest and replaced by that of Germany, I would suggest that the novel regards foreign imperialism as an essentialized autocracy moving westward across Europe towards Britain.

Chapter Four

"To abolish God!": The Demonology of Anarchism in *The Man Who Was Thursday*.

Chesterton's construction of anarchism in *The Man Who Was Thursday* has certain similarities with Conrad's, despite the more obvious differences between the two writers. These differences are both political and aesthetic. Chesterton, for example, expresses a sympathetic identification with the lower classes where Conrad, like James, articulates anxiety about their weakening influence on the nation; at least superficially, moreover, Chesterton would seem to engage directly in the philosophical content of anarchist doctrine in ways that contrast markedly with the cynical rejection of such beliefs by Conrad's narrator. Both writers, nevertheless, portray a struggle between the values of essential Englishness and the national threat represented by anarchism, though these values, associated with Sir Ethelred in *The Secret Agent*, are connected with the lower classes in *The Man Who Was Thursday*. As with Conrad, similarly, the anarchist threat in Chesterton is associated with Germany through the figure of Nietzsche who is frequently and explicitly present in Chesterton's writing. As we shall see, however, Chesterton's construction of anarchism as a mask of foreign imperialism is considerably less subtle than

Conrad's. Rather, its insistent demonization of anarchism within the context of a populist, imperialist ideology brings *The Man Who Was Thursday* into line with the more reductive representations of the movement found in popular fiction and the newspapers.

Chesterton's status as both a writer of popular fiction and a journalist would seem to suggest the obviousness of the preceding conclusion. Instead, however, this analysis contradicts the tendency of much criticism of Chesterton's fiction which attempts to erase the marks of popularity and journalism from his work. Chesterton criticism, indeed, has long been plagued by a recurring tendency, complicit with the ideology of the texts themselves, to dehistoricize his artistic production in favour of the image of a writer who, although working primarily in a journalistic context, ultimately expresses timeless truths. Thus Marshall McLuhan, decrying "ephemeral literary mannerisms," ("Where" 77) sees him as "a metaphysical moralist," (77) for whom "the kindest possible service [would be] to decry all that part of him which derives so obviously from his time" (76). Hugh Kenner, similarly, distinguishing between Chesterton the journalist and Chesterton "the metaphysician," (16) considers him exclusively within the context of the Christian Fathers and of medieval allegorizers (35). Such assessments indicate the difficulty of traditional literary taste to accommodate the popular component of Chesterton's

output. As John Coates, the only critic to have extensively read Chesterton within the broader context of Edwardian culture, observes, "It is felt that to remove Chesterton's working conditions and newspaper context is to separate him from the ephemeral, to enable his stature to be more fully realised" (48).

Such an attempt at erasing the historical grounds of Chesterton's literary production inevitably entails considerable critical distortion, since most of his work is explicitly journalistic and topical. Reading his texts, as Coates describes it,

> is to be at once aware of the processes of their making, the strategies, rewards and dangers of a dialogue with particular readers at a particular time, the extent to which style is a reaction to public, external forces and factors at work in a specific climate or ambience. (47)

This is especially true in the case of his fiction which, in its explicit engagement with topical themes, would appear to engage frankly in the heteroglossia of the Edwardian cultural climate. Examples of such cultural dialogism might be sought in, for example, the catalogue of views of Edwardian social thinkers in the first chapter of *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904), or the response to Islam and Nietzsche in *The Flying Inn* (1914), as well as in *The Man Who Was Thursday*'s (1908) engagement with anarchism.

Such intellectual dialogue, as I will argue in this chapter, is largely for show, since the explicit articulation of a specific ideology in Chesterton is managed through the unquestioning and explicit subordination of opposing social voices to the dominant ideology of his own texts. This subordination is more obvious than it is in James because it involves a religio-political ideology that is announced at every turn. Indeed, Chesterton's novels can be read as occupying a space somewhere between the philosophical dialogue and the "Roman Catholic propaganda" that George Orwell took them to be:

> Every book that he wrote, every paragraph, every sentence, every incident in every story, every scrap of dialogue, had to demonstrate beyond possibility of mistake the superiority of the Catholic over the Protestant or the pagan. But Chesterton was not content to think of this superiority as merely intellectual or spiritual: it had to be translated into terms of national prestige ... (365-66)

Orwell is correct in his assessment of the way in which the straw men of opposing voices in Chesterton's work are consistently assimilated to the pervasive monologue of a religio-nationalist ideology.

This ideology, as numerous critics have remarked, is essentially populist: Maurice Evans, for example, in his 1939 book on Chesterton that set the pattern for the largely

sympathetic strain in Chesterton criticism since, describes him as "the prophet and poet of the man in the street," who

> wrote for the crowd instead of the clique ... He has that most essential quality, a real knowledge of his fellow-men, and with it an almost mystical appreciation of the common things of life. (156-67)

Chesterton is thus diametrically opposed to the anxiety about the lower classes articulated in James and Conrad. Instead, he celebrates the 'common,' in contrast to social elites in the Edwardian period which attributed degenerate characteristics to the lower classes. In doing so, however, he maintains the association of anarchism with cultural degeneracy and foreignness found in Conrad, intensifying these associations to produce a notion of it as the instrument of a diabolical foreign-intellectual cabal that threatens English society. Although it inverts one corner of the triangle in *The Secret Agent*, therefore, *The Man Who Was Thursday* confirms the notion of anarchism as a social danger to which it proposes as a solution an ideology of 'natural,' stalwart Englishness.

The most powerful medium for the dissemination of this ideology for Chesterton was the newspapers, through which he reached the attention of an enormous and ready-made readership. The very accessibility of this readership, however, was a source of ambivalence for him. On the one hand, the newspapers supplied Chesterton with an audience

and an income, as well as the opportunity to vent his considerable opinions. On the other hand they represented, in their more sinister capacity, a vehicle for the dissemination of what he regarded as dangerous foreign and elitist ideologies among the British public. As Coates writes, Chesterton identified the explosion of newspaper readership at the end of the nineteenth century as the cause, as much as the vehicle, of the religious and intellectual crisis in the midst of which he perceived Britain to be:

> the changes in Fleet Street helped to make the intellectual crisis more urgent. The sudden arrival of new ideologies in an intellectually and morally stagnant culture threatened its stability and sanity. The advent of new technologies and methods of sale and management offered a vehicle, through a blurring of real issues and events, for diluted forms of these ideologies. (54)

Chesterton's concern for the welfare of the newspaper readership's souls, here, lays him open to the accusations of elitism with which he himself routinely lambasted the aristocracy and capital ownership. For Chesterton, indeed, the newspapers were an ideological battlefield in which the wisdom of popular truth -- which the people in a contradictory fashion needed to be taught -- was pitted against the more sinister voices of what Coates calls "new

ideologies." These included the voices of the ruling classes, anxiety about whose capacity to manipulate the context of news stories informs Chesterton's satirical treatment of reportage in *The Flying Inn* (1918):

> [A journalist] had already composed a leaderette on the Pebblewick incident, which rather pointed to the truth of the story, so far as his articles ever pointed to anything. His motives for veering vaguely in this direction were, as usual, complex. He knew the millionaire who owned the paper had a hobby of Spiritualism, and something might always come out of not suppressing a marvellous story ... [and] He knew that Lord Ivywood [who would be compromised by the story] must be mildly but not effectually checked; for Lord Ivywood was of The Other Party. (103)

The intervention of Lord Ivywood's secretary, however, prompts considerable revision of the original text into "something quite beyond the most bewildering article he had ever written in the past; and is still prized by those highly cultured persons who collect the worst literature of the world" (103).

The manipulation of 'truth' in the second part of this passage is only one of its significant aspects, the other being the suggestion in its first part that the honesty of the original story -- an account of a populist disruption of an occasion dedicated to the preaching of 'foreign'

doctrines -- is itself politically determined by the elite whose interests it threatens to overthrow. The potentially deconstructive ramifications of this passage are, however, ignored both in this novel and elsewhere in Chesterton. Overwhelmingly, instead, he regards newspapers as a potential conduit for the 'pure' truth of his own ideology to penetrate elitist obfuscation, and regards his own enormous journalistic output as essentially non-dialogic; instead of producing ideology it is the revelation of an eternal truth that penetrates the screen of corrupt modern 'ideas.'

Chesterton effects the transmission of this truth through the 'recovery' of an imaginary alternate audience in place of the one he assumes exists for modern ideas, but which he suggests is unrepresentative of the British population. He does so in typically paradoxical fashion by attacking journalism, a tactic whose disingenuousness is made manifest by the fact that it occurs in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*. In 1908, for example, he writes in an article entitled "Gossip and Public Journalism," that

> ... I have come to the conclusion that if you never believe in the Press and if you always believe private gossip (within reason) you will probably be right. Private gossip is so much more serious than the Press. Private gossip is so much more responsible than the Press ... A man does not wear a mask when he tells you

> a story in a club; but a man does wear a mask when he tells you a story in the columns of the *Daily Post* or the *Morning Telegraph*. The man in the club may be drunk -- he generally is -- but he is sober enough to remember his own name. But the Special Correspondent is sober enough to forget his own name, or, at least, to conceal it ... The frivolous chatter is now all in public journalism. The public responsibility is all in private conversation. (37)

The stance of a journalist denouncing his own profession in favour of a putatively plain speech is thus a rhetorical ploy with powerful ideological implications.

These implications become clarified when we look at the individual subject of the imaginary political group implied by the category of "private conversation." This is the figure of the 'common man,' "one of the ordinary people," (*Orthodoxy* 4) "the old beer-drinking, creed-making, fighting, failing, sensual, respectable man," (*Heretics* 67) whose identity lies not in his individuality, but in his common status which is legitimized through his membership in what the political scientist Donald MacRae calls a "consensual and uniform" (160) community. He is thus the paradox of the unique yet generic individual constructed by populist ideology, who, we can note here, is the diametrical opposite of the essentialist subject of anarchism. In the case of anarchism, social organization is legitimized by the

free agency of its members; with populist ideology, on the other hand, it is only through his or her submission to a social body that the individual is legitimized.

In her book *G.K. Chesterton: Radical Populist*, Margaret Canovan summarizes the elements of this ideology which she sees as governing Chesterton's work:

> At its heart lies always a faith in the common sense of ordinary, hard-working people, especially country people, and an intense suspicion of metropolitan society, plutocrats, bureaucrats, and intellectuals. Populists are usually tradition-minded advocates of the simple virtues of country life; they are often fierce defenders of small property, though hostile to the landlords, moneylenders, and other intruders who threaten the small farmer's security. They dislike complex arrangements and subtle promises, and have the outsider's distrust of professional politicians. (5-6)

McLuhan, in a similarly approving tone, considers Chesterton's populism "literally" radical "because he goes to the root of things" ("Practical" 4), and even revolutionary: through his concern "to maintain our endangered institutions ... he earnestly seeks to re-establish agriculture and small property, the only basis of any free culture" (2).

These views represent the sympathetic strain that has dominated the corpus of Chesterton criticism since Evans and

that reproduces the ideology of his texts without questioning the nature of the 'truth' they supposedly articulate. Reading Chesterton as essentially -- and at times obviously -- ideological, on the other hand, allows us to elucidate less attractive elements of his populist ideology that are elided by the critical tradition. If Chesterton's perspective is radical, as Canovan and McLuhan suggest, it is also a form of conservatism that regards anarchism, in *The Man Who Was Thursday*, as a demonized other. To help situate the construction of anarchism in this novel it is useful to look at another example of Chesterton's fiction, *The Flying Inn* (1914), in which, under the pressure of the First World War, the implicit populist ideology of the earlier novel appears in more explicit form.

The Flying Inn, which is set in a near future when the Islamic empire has colonized Britain, can be read as a late example of Edwardian invasion fiction. Its action is centred upon the banning of alcohol during a Turkish occupation and recounts the adventures of two characters, Captain Dalroy, an Irish soldier, and Humphrey Pump, an English publican, in their incitement of a populist revolt against the occupiers and their collaborators, the English aristocracy, represented by the character of Philip Ivywood. In their capacity as revolutionary leaders, both Dalroy and Pump are spokesmen for a conception of English history that is identified with the common man and an essential

Englishness that, six years earlier in *Orthodoxy* (1908) Chesterton claimed to have "discovered" (4). Dalroy's voice calling to Ivywood at a certain point in the narrative, for example, sounds as if "all the past and people of England were uttering their oracle out of the cavern" (169).

This conception of Englishness is constructed around the institution of the inn as an essentially English and popular institution associated with the rights of the socially oppressed. When Dalroy offers the mistreated chauffeur of an aristocratic and effete poet a forbidden drink, the latter "seemed not so much to pluck up his courage, but rather to drag up some forgotten courage from the foundations of some unfathomable sea. It was indeed the forgotten courage of the people" (179). Englishness is also identified with the rural, in opposition to the urban and to the corrupt institution of parliament that is manipulated by the aristocracy; it thus corresponds to the ideal of the sacred farm at the centre of an "agrarian *gemeinschaft*" that MacRae notes as central to populist ideology (155-56).

Pump, the representative of Englishness in *The Flying Inn*, exemplifies this populist idealization of rural life. The novel's first description of him emphasizes his affiliation with local rural tradition and his intiracy with the land:

> He was ... as cunning as Pan or a poacher in everything affecting every bird or dish, every

> leaf or berry in the woods. His mind was a rich soil of subconscious memories and traditions ... he always took it for granted that everyone knew his county and its tales as intimately as he did ... He was very English. (33)

This intimacy is established as a mystical, holistic knowledge of popular folk traditions which the foreign invaders and domestic ruling classes lack. As a foil to Pump's rural traditionalism, for example, the novel presents the figure of the Turkish prophet Misysra Ammon, an object of relentless satire ridiculed for his alien origin and the wild misinterpretation of English popular history represented by his theory that the names of English inns are of Islamic origin.

The Flying Inn thus privileges the nationalist populism it espouses as a natural fact, a form of non-rational, mystical apprehension through which an intimate knowledge of the countryside and of popular traditions are connected with a normative version of political power. Addressing Pump, for example, Dalroy defends Englishness by saying that

> ... you boast of being illogical -- which is about the only thing you do that really *is* stupid ... You English are supremely an artistic people, and therefore you go by associations ... you won't have one thing without the other thing that goes with it. And as you can't imagine a village without a squire and parson, or a

> college without port and old oak, you get the reputation of being Conservative people. But it's because you're sensitive ... not because you're stupid, that you won't part with things. (193)

In this passage, the aesthetic appropriateness of combinations of elements of culture -- the 'natural' association of squire and parson, college, port and old oak -- authorizes the politically legitimizing notion of Englishness. Truth is therefore experienced as an aestheticized version of history and tradition that represses any traces of explicitly ideological content.

What this mystical apprehension of Englishness legitimizes specifically is a sympathy with the common man that inverts the threatening constructions of mob revolt with which anarchism is often associated, as we have seen, over the course of the nineteenth century. By contrast to these constructions, the mob in Chesterton is invariably valorized as the spontaneous expression of the voice of the people, and its violence represented as a danger only to those who oppose its basic truth. In *The Flying Inn*, for example, the mass uprising incited by Dalroy and Pump is described as a response to "That storm spirit, or eagle of liberty, which is the sudden soul in a crowd." It corresponds, moreover, to the notion of aesthetic truth noted above:

> The actual outbreak generally has a symbolic or artistic, or what some would call whimsical cause. Somebody fires off a pistol or appears in an unpopular uniform, or refers in a loud voice to a scandal that is never mentioned in the newspapers; somebody takes off his hat, or somebody doesn't take off his hat; and a city is sacked before midnight. When the ever-swelling army of revolt smashed a whole street ... and then went on to Parliament, the Tower of London and the road to the sea, the sociologists hiding in their cellars could think ... of many material and spiritual explanations of such a storm in human souls; but of none that explained it quite enough. (302)

The crowd here is fearsome only to those who attempt to explain it, the sociologists cowering in their cellars; to those who participate in its energies it is the artistic, non-rational expression of popular liberty, inaugurated by a dramatic, mystically appropriate gesture and fueled by hostility towards the rich.

Chesterton's privileging of the image of the common man as a domestically oppressed figure, here and elsewhere, is accompanied by a derogation of specific national, religious and racial others, as the relentless orientalism of *The Flying Inn* demonstrates. Ammon, the most salient representative of Islam in *The Flying Inn*, for example, is described repeatedly in terms of racial stereotypes: he has

a "nose ... of the sort associated with Judea" and a "beard ... [of] the sort of black wedge we associate with Persia" (12). This derogation occurs within the context of an imperialism more traditionally nationalistic than its Liberal variant observed in Conrad. *The Flying Inn* is a clear articulation of imperialist ideology both through its celebration of essential Englishness and through numerous events in the narrative: the novel begins with Dalroy rejecting a peace treaty with the Turks, for example, and finds him later expounding on the imperial abilities justifying the non-rational apprehension of Englishness: "As if anybody ever made an empire or anything else by saying that two and two make five" (193).

Chesterton naturalizes imperialism here by having the virtues of empire preached to Pump by an Irishman; he constructs it as non-aggressive, moreover, by depicting the resistance to Turkish occupation as an explicitly defensive "Crusade," (276) the effort of "the small Christian tribes" to "break the strength of Turkey" (22). Religion, specifically Catholicism, is the point at which the populist ideology (88) that structures Chesterton's texts converges with and naturalizes their Liberal imperialism. In *The Flying Inn*, the mob revolt against foreign invasion is led by representatives of England and Ireland; in *The Man Who Was Thursday* France -- a nation that Chesterton idealized, in Orwell's words, as "a land of Catholic peasants

incessantly singing the *Marseillaise* over glasses of red wine" (365-6) -- joins in the defence of Britain against the scourge of another kind of foreignness, anarchism. The defence of the empire is thus articulated as the preservation of a natural union of mutually Catholic nations against the depredations of a hostile, land-grabbing imperialism represented in *The Flying Inn* by the somewhat incongruous choice of Turkey, and in *The Man Who Was Thursday* by a political other that, as with *The Secret Agent* is marked conspicuously by traces of Germanness.

Like *The Flying Inn*, *The Man Who Was Thursday* privileges the experience of the common man and the crowd against the dangerous individualism of modern ideas that is epitomized in the novel by anarchism. The symbol of the common, once again, is the inn, a site of working-class community in which Syme and the unveiled Professor de Worms rest from their nightmarish pursuit of Dr Bull:

> In that place they dined and slept, both very thoroughly. The beans and bacon, which these unaccountable people cooked well, the astonishing emergence of Burgundy from their cellars, crowned Syme's sense of a new comradeship and comfort. Through all this ordeal his root horror had been isolation, and there are no words to express the abyss between isolation and having one ally. It may be conceded to the mathematicians that four is twice two. But two is

> not twice one; two is two thousand times one. That is why, in spite of a hundred disadvantages, the world will always return to monogamy. (548)

The notion of the common for which the inn stands here is dehistoricized and amplified to the status of a metaphysical essence through the figure of music. In this respect the novel inverts the ideology of taste operative in *The Princess Casamassima*. In a scene in James's novel in which aristocratic taste is naturalized, a lower class audience is irresistibly attracted to the window of the Princess's house by the strains of her piano. In Chesterton, on the other hand, the sound of popular music, represented by an organ grinder heard in the street recurs throughout the narrative as a stabilizing influence which grounds Syme's awareness in transcendentalized popular experience: "Once he heard very faintly in some distant street a barrel-organ begin to play, and it seemed to him that his heroic words were moving to a tiny tune from under or beyond the world" (482).

The element of the transcendent prefigured by this music emerges over the course of the novel through a gradual revelation of populist religiosity that culminates in the divine masque at Sunday's house. The apocalyptic sense of the divine affirmed by this conclusion justifies its inquisitorial or militant defence of 'the common man' when his way of life is threatened by anarchism. Joining the

philosophical police force, for example, Syme inveighs against modern irreligion in the name of seeking out enemies of orthodoxy, among which anarchism is the main culprit:

> ... the modern world has retained all those parts of police work which are really oppressive and ignominious, the harrying of the poor, the spying upon the unfortunate. It has given up its more dignified work, the punishment of powerful traitors in the State and powerful heresiarchs in the Church. The moderns say we must not punish heretics. My only doubt is whether we have a right to punish anybody else. (509)

The declaration of this right to punishment occurs, as in *The Flying Inn*, within an atmosphere of holy war, the "fine justification" of which, according to Kenner, is "adequately dramatized in *The Man Who Was Thursday*" (92). The monotonous crusader rhetoric of *The Flying Inn* is prefigured in Syme's dualistic understanding of his quest in terms of a line from the *Song of Roland*, "*Païens ont tort et Chrétiens ont droit*" (529) and his understanding of himself as a modern knight errant:

> ... the more he felt this glittering desolation in the moonlit land, the more his own chivalric folly glowed in the night like a great fire ... The sword-stick and the brandy-flask, though in themselves only the tools of morbid conspirators, became the expression of his own more healthy romance. The sword-stick became

> almost the sword of chivalry, the brandy the wine of the stirrup-cup. (513)

Anarchism in *The Man Who Was Thursday* resembles Islam in *The Flying Inn* in posing a profound threat to this notion of a chivalric hero who represents the Christian masses. As will be seen, the terms in which both enemies are figured are often remarkably similar. *The Man Who Was Thursday*'s construction of anarchism, however, has its own specificity as the demonized other of populist ideology that is slightly more complex than the crude medievalism of the later novel. One reason for this complexity is the novel's 'surprise', the fact that most of the anarchists in the novel are not real but policemen in disguise. From the point of view of its repeated motif of unmasking, indeed, *The Man Who Was Thursday* might seem to be once again attacking the "frivolous chatter" of journalism, in particular journalism's dissemination of anarchist stereotypes. The anarchist Lucian Gregory, for example, comments that the public

> learn about anarchists from six-penny novels; they learn about anarchists from tradesmen's newspapers; they learn about anarchists from *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday* and the *Sporting Times*. They never learn about anarchists from anarchists. (498)

After experiencing the real thing, furthermore, Syme in an apparent subversion of anarchist stereotypes reproaches

himself for imagining in a restaurant "full of ... the chatter of foreigners ... that all these harmless and kindly aliens were anarchists" (535); and the reliance of criminology on these stereotypes, similarly, is finally undercut when the detectives realize that, instead of anarchists, "We were all a lot of silly policemen looking at each other" (604).

What might seem to be an apparent subversion of anarchist typology here does not, in fact, work to defend anarchism against its detractors. One reason for this is that although Syme is fooled by the anarchist disguises of the other detectives, so too the anarchists he addresses are fooled by his own disguise and by the 'typical' anarchist doctrine he preaches to them. This reversal suggests that despite the unmasking of the members of the anarchist council over the course of the narrative, anarchism does exist in a 'genuine' form: thus Gregory, the anarchist whom Syme meets at the beginning of the novel and whose challenge impels him on his quest for Sunday is irreducibly present as "the real anarchist" (632) at the end, rejecting the gospel imparted to the policemen by Sunday.

At the same time, the motif of unmasking policemen has another significance for the novel, one that can perhaps be symbolized by this simultaneous existence of real and false anarchists. The theme of discarding the fake disguise is a

metaphor in *The Man Who Was Thursday* for the nature of anarchism itself in which anarchism is essentialized as a form of inauthenticity and fakery. The reason that the anarchists are so easily deceived by Syme's imposture, therefore, is that they are themselves stereotypes. This is most clearly seen in the imitation by a policeman of the anarchist Professor de Worms:

> I made myself up into what was meant for a wild exaggeration of the old Professor's dirty old self. When I went into the room full of his supporters I expected to be received ... with a roar of indignation at the insult. I cannot describe the surprise I felt when my entrance was received with a respectful silence, followed ... with a murmur of admiration ... I had been too subtle, I had been too true. They thought I really was the great Nihilist Professor ... The real Professor was thrown out, but not with violence, though one man tried very patiently to pull off his nose. He is now, I believe, received everywhere in Europe as a delightful impostor. His apparent earnestness and anger, you see, make him all the more entertaining. (549-51)

Anarchism is thus the celebration of superficiality, and the anarchist easily falsified because he is himself a form of falseness.

This reading, however, does not fully resolve the ideological split that underwrites the irreducibly double status of anarchism in *The Man Who Was Thursday*. On the one hand, through the unmasking theme, anarchism is a form of fakery that poses no real threat to society; taking it seriously leads only, as in the case of Syme and his companions, to comic humiliation and the revelation that fears are ungrounded. On the other hand, this unmasking cannot occlude the presence of cultural anxieties that is indicated by the disproportionate amount of narrative energy devoted to ridiculing fears of anarchism, a task that takes up the entire novel and which appears ultimately as an act of self-persuasion on the part of the narrator.

In this respect, the novel's subtitle, "A Nightmare," suggests the prolonged taming of a terrifying vision that not only presents images of danger in the form of apparent anarchists, but is itself a threat in the danger it presents to the perennial Chestertonian value of "sanity." Though they are figments of a bad dream from which Syme slowly awakens, therefore, the false anarchists are nevertheless sources of terror; they are disguised, but as monsters who suggest the presence of considerable anxiety. The anarchists at the Feast of Fear, for example, are described variously as "unnerving," (515) "hideous," (523) and "dreadful," (523) while crowning the "horror of the whole

scene" (60) is Sunday himself, viewing whom, "Syme was gripped with a fear ... that he would scream aloud" (519).

As Garry Wills notes, (ix) the mood of nightmare that pervades the novel preserves a sense of fear, even as the anarchists, one by one, are unmasked. The taming of the nightmare through a process of religious rationalization in *The Man Who Was Thursday* is, in the words of Jorge Luis Borges, "the precarious subjection of a demoniacal will," (84) that marks a central "discord" (84) in Chesterton, a split which Borges sees as occurring between the writing of triumphant, Bunyanesque parables, on the one hand, and of Kafkaesque nightmares on the other (84-84). The subjection of dread by the "reason" Chesterton calls the Catholic faith (84) is predicated upon that dread's existence, even if in the form of a phantasm that masks a specific cultural fear. The novel enacts the escape from "those old fears" described in its prefatory poem, the "huge devils" so "dreadful to withstand" that can be recounted only after they have been safely overcome. By relegating these fears of anarchism to the status of superficiality and dream, however, Chesterton far from defuses their threatening quality.

What is the shape of the nightmare of anarchisr in *The Man Who Was Thursday*? Constructed as the other of populism's self-understanding as a form of mystical gnosis, anarchism is identified with an insane reliance on philosophical reason. This hyperrationality is suggested,

among other places, by the description of the tenement in which Dr Bull lives:

> As [Syme] now went up the weary and perpetual steps, he was daunted and bewildered by their almost infinite series. But it was not the hot horror of a dream of anything that might be exaggeration or delusion. Their infinity was more like the empty infinity of arithmetic, something unthinkable, yet necessary to thought. Or it was like the stunning statements of astronomy about the distance of the fixed stars. He was ascending the house of reason, a thing more hideous than unreason itself. (556)

Pure reason, upon which anarchist doctrine is based, is a monstrous and inhuman abstraction, and the product of an unbalanced mind. Chesterton here conforms to the link made in anarchist typology between anarchism and clinical reason that we see, for example, in the figure of the terrorist chemist. As with Conrad's construction of the character of the Professor, he identifies the intellectual sources of anarchism as a psychological aberration. Anarchy is "having no rules for one's mind" (*What's Wrong* 141); its exponents "possess no power of distinction, or sense of proportion" (*Eugenics* 313); anarchists, in fact, "will endure everything except one thing -- sense" ("Conversion" 248); like the thinking of the maniacs of modern ideas he describes in *Orthodoxy*, the disorder of the anarchist's mind consists of

fixation on a single element of thought, from which proceed hyper-reductive universal explanations. This reduction is, as well, a form of obsessive repetition, the monstrous isolation in time of a single constitutive act:

> Anarchy is that condition of the mind or methods in which you cannot stop yourself ... It is not anarchy because men are permitted to begin uproar, extravagance, peril. It is anarchy when people cannot *end* these things. (*Eugenics* 310)

Hyper-reductiveness is parodied in the appearance of the anarchists in *The Man Who Was Thursday*. The monstrousness of each of them derives from the exaggeration of an individual element of his features:

> [Syme] began to see in each of them ... a demoniac detail somewhere ... Each man had something about him, perceived perhaps at the tenth or twentieth glance, which was not normal, and which seemed hardly human. The only metaphor he could think of was this, that they all looked as men of fashion and presence would look, with the additional twist given in a false and curved mirror. (521)

These grotesque features, the physical analogues of anarchism's distorted thought, are balanced against a comic misunderstanding of the world that manifests itself as ignorance and bumbling ineptitude. In this respect the novel participates directly in anarchist typology. Syme's

predecessor, as I noted in Chapter One, fails in his attempt to blow up Brighton pier. Gregory, similarly, describes his failure to disguise his identity in terms of an ignorance about religion that derives from anarchist propaganda:

> I dressed up as a bishop. I read up all about bishops in our anarchist pamphlets, in *Superstition the Vampire* and *Priests of Prey*. I certainly understood from them that bishops are strange and terrible old men keeping a cruel secret from mankind. I was misinformed. When on my first appearing in episcopal gaiters in a drawing-room I cried out in a voice of thunder, "Down! down! presumptuous human reason!" they found out in some way that I was not a bishop at all. I was nabbed at once. (491)

Against this impracticality attendant upon the insane reason of anarchism, *The Man Who Was Thursday* advocates what Karin Youngberg calls, "sanity through unreason," (241) or "sense," an irreducible quality over against which anarchism's otherness is constructed. Often this opposition is represented through the binary symbols of tower and tree, which represent artificial rationality and natural sense respectively. In the vision he experiences upon first meeting the anarchist council, Syme sees

> that if a man went westward to the end of the world he would find something -- say a tree -- that was more or less than a tree, a tree possessed by a spirit; and

> that if he went east to the end of the world he would find something else that was not wholly itself -- a tower, perhaps, of which the very shape was wicked. (524)

These two images represent polar oppositions, "visions from the verge," standing up "against an ultimate horizon" (524). The wicked tower, Bull's "tower in a dream," represents insane reason, while the spiritual tree signifies divine order and the sacred relationship to the earth articulated by populist ideology.

Syme's argument with the anarchist Gregory at the beginning of the novel about a tree and lamppost prefigures this vision and establishes the novel's understanding of the proper uses of reason. For Gregory, the tree is an image of "anarchy, rich, living, reproducing itself ... splendid in green and gold," (483) while the lamppost which illuminates it is only "your precious order ... lean ... ugly and barren" (483). In the context of the novel's theology, which constructs an opposition between anarchy and naturalness, Gregory's words represent an attempt to claim for anarchism an emblem that properly signifies natural, divine order. Syme's response -- "All the same ... just at present you only see the tree by the light of the lamp. I wonder when you would ever see the lamp by the light of the tree" (483) -- constitutes the rectification of this error

by its recontainment within the category of Chestertonian "sense."

Anti-anarchist sense is constructed in opposition to the notion of irrational poetry articulated by the anarchist Gregory; Chesterton associates Gregory's aesthetic with decadence and revolt, which, in a characteristic pun, he describes literally as "mere vomiting" (479). Syme, the "poet of law ... [and] order" (477) rejects the association of art and anarchy found in Nordau's theory of degeneration, or in English writers, like William Barry, who described anarchism as "a literary disease" ("Anarchy" 186); instead he equates genuine poetry with things going "sacredly and silently right" (481). In his use of the London trains as a symbol of this 'rightness' Syme unites imperialism, Christianity and civic order against anarchist chaos:

> every time a train comes in I feel that it has broken past batteries of besiegers and that man has won a battle against chaos ... And when I hear the guard shout out the word "Victoria", it is not an unmeaning word. It is to me the cry of a herald announcing conquest ... it is the victory of Adam. (479)

In a contradiction characteristic of anarchist typology, the inept anarchist reason opposed by this notion of sense is nevertheless capable of organizing large scale conspiracies. In *The Man Who Was Thursday*, this conspiracy is structured along the difference between two types of

anarchists. Neither of these types, the novel emphasizes, is a product of genuine political oppression, a mistake against which Syme is warned by the policeman who counsels him not to confuse anarchism with "those chance dynamite outbreaks from Russia or from Ireland, which are really the outbreaks of oppressed if misled men" (510). Instead, the "outer ring" or "innocent section" (510) of the "vast philosophical movement" which is anarchism is populated by those who are "merely anarchists," and believe in naïve Kropotkinian theories of societal oppression that the novel constructs as clearly utopian. These anarchists

> believe that rules and formulas have destroyed human happiness. They believe that all the evil results of human crime are the results of the system that has called it crime ... Naturally, therefore, these people talk about "a happy time coming"; "the bondage of vice and the bondage of virtue", and so on. (510)

The inner ring of the conspiracy which controls it consists of a different type that is only superficially similar:

> the men of the inner circle speak ... to applauding crowds of the happiness of the future, and of mankind freed at last. But in their mouths ... these happy phrases have a horrible meaning. They are under no illusions ... And they mean death. When they say that mankind shall be free at last, they mean that mankind shall commit suicide. When they talk of paradise

> without right or wrong, they mean the grave. They have but two objects, to destroy first humanity and then themselves. (511)

This section of anarchist leadership is characterized by two significant features. The first is their identification, in opposition to the populist common man, with sinister social elites. For Chesterton, anarchism as a form of popular uprising was a contradiction in terms. In a section of *Eugenics and Other Evils* (1922), for example, he attacks the use of the term anarchy by

> the more sentimental sort of Tory ... as a mere term of abuse for rebellion ... Rebellion may be wrong and disastrous; but even when rebellion is wrong, it is never anarchy ... chaos can possess the powers that rule a society as easily as the society so ruled. And in modern England it is the powers that rule who are chiefly possessed by it. (311)

This description of "The Anarchy From Above" (309) is similar to Shelley's view of Anarchy "Trampling/ ... the adoring multitude," (302) and Sunday's pageant which concludes *The Man Who Was Thursday* can be read, in this respect, as a restitutive response to the Mask of Anarchy in Shelley's poem, offering a masque of divine order opposed to one of humanly induced chaos. This chaos is the work of an elite conspiracy whose existence causes Colonel Ducroix to

combine a disbelief in the notion of working class anarchism with yet another vindication of mobs:

> Mere mobs! ... you talk about mobs and the working classes as if they were the question. You've got that eternal idiotic idea that if anarchy came it would come from the poor. Why should it? The poor have been rebels, but they have never been anarchists: they have more interest than anyone else in there being some decent government ... Aristocrats were always anarchists, as you can see from the barons' wars ... most of old Sunday's right-hand men are South African and American millionaires. (584-85)

The second identifying feature of anarchism's inner circle is the purpose of universal destruction, behind a facade of altruism, to which it is dedicated. It also, of course, participates in the popular rhetoric about anarchism as a world-destroying conspiracy, inspired by Bakunin's Revolutionary Council, an association symbolized by the description of the anarchist headquarters as decorated with the technology of death:

> Inside the doorway the passage gleamed as if it were lined with a network of steel. On a second glance, Syme saw that the glittering pattern was really made up of ranks and ranks of rifles and revolvers, closely packed or interlocked ... They passed through several such passages, and came out at last into a queer steel

> chamber, with curved walls, almost spherical in shape ... There were no rifles or pistols in this apartment, but round the walls of it were hung more dubious and dreadful shapes, things that looked like the bulbs of iron plants, or the eggs of iron birds. They were bombs, and the very room itself seemed like the inside of a bomb. (489)

The implicit connections between annihilation and Nietzsche that I argued for in the case of Conrad's Professor are made explicit in Chesterton. Nietzsche is a universal *bête noire* for Chesterton in a way that he is not for Conrad, whose relationship to him is ambivalent. He becomes, in fact, a general type for everything Chesterton considers wrong with the modern world, and, in the convergence of both constructions of anarchism seen so far -- the inept and the annihilatory -- associated with his name, stands as an all-embracing figure in which these constructions meet.

Chesterton's attacks on Nietzsche are numerous, though repetitive. In a short story entitled "A Nightmare," for example, the Chestertonian protagonist encounters two modern philosophers discussing the rebuilding of St Paul's, one of whom is named Dr Blood, the other "a blonde German with watery eyes and wild moustaches" (89). The architectural recommendations of this caricature of Nietzsche are, like Bull's tower of reason, marked by an insanity of design:

> From the man to the superman! From the structure to the superstructure! I will tell you the fault of your architecture; it is not upon the nature-energy based! Your churches are larger at the bottom, smaller at the top. But the all-mother-born trees are smaller at the bottom, larger at the top. So should this cathedral be. In the first floor two domes, in the second floor three domes, in the third floor and so on, ever branching, ever increasing, each landing larger than the last one, till at last ... (89)

Gregory's anti-Christian attempt to appropriate the tree as an exemplary figure is identified here with *ubermenschian* hubris. It is the notion of "that preposterous, pre-natal bore," ("Bottom Dog" 235) advanced by "that pathetic and poisoned Puritan whose name was Nietzsche," (236) that bears the brunt of Chesterton's scorn. He explicitly identifies the *ubermensch* with anarchism in his paraphrasing of Nietzschean thought:

> His notion was this: that, just as a brutal and bewildering anarchy of animals had somehow brought man forth -- a being superior to the ape -- so a brutal and bewildering anarchy of men might bring forth some inconceivable being who should be better still. (236)

At the same time, however, an "Anarchist like Nietzsche has a right to talk of 'the Superman' without knowing what it means ..." (236). What it *does* mean, as far as

Chesterton is concerned, is another example of Darwinian and Huxleyian evolutionary thought, which in another context he attacks vehemently for its disavowal of moral responsibility:

> In a chaotic struggle, the Superman simply means whatever creature finds itself on top of man. The creature may have five legs. He may have nine heads or none. You may, if you like, imagine some unthinkable huge hybrid evolved out of biological chaos; and you can call such a creature by a grand, unmeaning name. This, I suppose is what Nietzsche did. He said: "Throw all creatures, nice and nasty, eye of newt and toe of frog, hand of ape and wing of angel, into the cauldron of anarchy; and whatever monster comes to the top like scum, I will call the Superman." (236)

The creature which rises to the top of this occult, Huxleyian free fight of nature is ar occasion for laughter rather than praise. In "How I Found The Superman" (1909), Chesterton can be seen, like Conrad, to be mocking the discrepancy between Nietzsche's sickliness and *ubermenschian* power-worship. He describes a creature, one of the parents of whom is an interfering philanthropist that subscribes to "the creed of Zoroaster" (101), who "creates his own standard" (103) but is so frail that he is killed by a draught from an open door, and is carried out in a "a coffin that was not of any human shape" (104). Gregory, in *The*

Man Who Was Thursday, "seemed like a walking blasphemy, a blend of the angel and the ape," (477) while the cult of the superman is based on cowardice:

> Many moderns, inured to a weak worship of intellect and force, might have wavered in their allegiance under [the] oppression of a great personality ... But this was a kind of modern meanness to which Syme could not sink ... Like any man, he was a coward enough to fear great force; but he was not coward enough to admire it. (526)

The Man Who Was Thursday's attack on Nietzsche as a representative of anarchism constitutes an example of populist xenophobia, as well as the end point of the movement that replaces France with Germany as the threatening national source of revolution. The Germanness of the thought of Professor de Worms, "the great German nihilist philosopher," (549) is an essential part of its absurdity. Speaking of "the delicacies of ... German philosophy," (542) de Worms declares that

> In an evolutionary sense ... the ape fades so gradually into the policeman, that I myself can never detect the shade. The monkey is only the policeman that may be. Perhaps a maiden lady on Clapham Common is only the policeman that might have been. I don't mind being the policeman that might have been. I don't mind being anything in German thought. (542)

This attribution of evolutionary thought exclusively to Germany permits the novel to complete its triadic construction of anarchism's cultural threat: in addition to being intellectual and elitist, anti-populist ideology is foreign in origin. In its alliance of England with Catholic France, the novel identifies this foreignness explicitly with Germany, thus exemplifying the shift away from the former to the latter as the source of anarchic threat that I indicated in the first chapter, and justifying the imperialist defence of the realm against the incursions of socially weakening ideologies.

For Chesterton, German thought is a mask for something else, the eruption of an even more alien other into Christian culture. As John Coates notes, "The modern philosophy of the Superman, eternal recurrence and *amor fati*, is, for Chesterton simply the ancient fatalism of the East" (93). Germany is thus a conduit for an essentialized version of eastern thought, that Hugh Kenner, writing of "the restless, formless patterns of Turkish carpets, the restless, pointless cycle of Nirvana, and the annihilistic self-contemplation of the East," (140) describes in terms suggestive of the attributes of annihilation and repetition that Chesterton gives anarchism. In *The Man Who Was Thursday*, Chesterton's orientalism, though not as obvious as it is in *The Flying Inn*, finds expression in the portrayal of the Marquis de St Eustach:

> Whatever he was he was not a Frenchman; he might be a Jew; he might be something deeper yet in the dark heart of the East. In the bright coloured Persian tiles and pictures showing tyrants hunting, you may see just those almond eyes, those blue-black beards, those cruel, crimson lips. (522)

Sensuality, cruelty, darkness, hints of what Edward Said calls "the strangely threatening excesses of Oriental mysteries" (56) and of a forbidden region that is, racially, beyond Judaism, the historical boundary of Christianity: the typology of anarchism is connected here with that of orientalism to suggest decadence and tyranny. Also suggested by details such as suffocating blackness and the suggestion of an originary evil located in "the dark heart of the East" is a rhetoric of diabolism which is central to medieval discourse about the east (68-69).

This demonizing component of orientalism, hinted at in the description of St Eustache, complements the novel's explicit exploitation of anarchist typology in its construction of anarchism as a form of satanism. In *Eugenics And Other Evils* Chesterton describes the state governed by anarchy as "truly possessed by devils" (311). In *The Man Who Was Thursday*, these devils are anarchists, represented most explicitly by Gregory, whose thinly disguised first name, Lucian, invokes Milton's Anarch. Gregory is identified symbolically with Satan at the end of

the novel, (633) and his 'Nietzschean' desire to abolish "Right and wrong" is really the satanic wish -- which echoes Bakunin's motto "Neither God Nor Master" -- "To abolish God!" (490). The anarchist poet, says Gregory, "will be discontented even in the streets of heaven," (479) and the anarchist conspiracy is a kind of parodic anti-church, the outer ring constituting "the laity," the inner circle "the sacred priesthood" (510).

In this respect, the motif of unmasking by which the threat of anarchism is contained in the novel converges with the Christian component of populist ideology. *The Man Who was Thursday* can be interpreted, as Boyd suggests, "in terms of Chesterton's sacramental view of life, according to which nature both conceals and leads to the divine" (44). Nature is therefore itself a romantic mask of the divine, as Syme recognizes at the end of his quest; "Shall I tell you the secret of the world?" he asks:

> It is that we have only known the back of the world. We see everything from behind, and it looks brutal. That is not a tree, but the back of a tree ... Cannot you see that everything is stooping and hiding a face? (622)

As Kenner notes, the character of Sunday, whose transcendent identity constitutes the perspective from which the apparent chaos of nature can be seen as actually ordered, is the face behind the divine mask:

> when, in the final sentences of [the novel], the last mask is torn off the face of Nature, there is displayed the older face of God ... [in whom] is transcended the isolation of soul from soul. (139-40)

For Chesterton, the apparent anarchy of nature is in reality the perceived fragments of a divine whole. Like everything else, anarchism, which exemplifies the isolation of soul from soul, has, simultaneously, a transcendent cause; anarchism differs from other entities, however, in that its denial of divinity is driven by satanic pride. Anarchism seeks to assert its fragmentary nature into a religious truth of its own, a false truth both blasphemous and diabolical. As such it exemplifies a construction of otherness by Chesterton's text similar to the construction of Islam as a false version of Christianity in orientalist discourse. The anarchist conspiracy's status as a false church is opposed in the novel to the 'true' conspiracy of God. The revelation of this divine conspiracy occurs in Sunday's pageant, and is indicated by the emblematic sky over Saffron Park, which "looked so close about the earth as to express nothing by a violent secrecy. The very empyrean seemed to be a secret" (477).

Rather than parodying typological discourse, then, the unmasking motif in *The Man Who Was Thursday* can be read as reinforcing it within a religious ideology. Anarchists are types of true evil; only the chivalric hero with access to

an ineffable populist comprehension of the world is capable of discerning its ontological falseness. The containment of anarchism within the divine order, moreover, is demonstrated by Sunday's exploitation of Syme's fears of anarchism to induce in him the suffering through which, according to Catholic ideology, the truth is revealed to him. As Youngberg observes, the novel can be read as an enactment of Jobian suffering in which Syme and the other detectives

> seek from [Sunday] rational answers to rational questions, and are painfully frustrated by the maniacal and nightmarish world in which they find themselves. Yet it is the mad nightmare which arouses in the detective a "transcendental instinct" ... (251)

It is by following this instinct that divine truth is revealed. The Chestertonian ideology of suffering as the means to populist truth is therefore played out through a nightmare that is also identified at numerous points in the text as a drama staged for Syme's spiritual edification, (10, 39) a nightmare, specifically, of anarchism by which anarchism is finally, and sophistically, reduced to the status of an instrument by which this ideology is reaffirmed.

AFTERWORD: ANARCHY NOW

> Oskar died ... like a comedian. He went to talk to the army and tell them not to be pawns ... As he reached the streetcorner across from the parade ground he tripped over his own shoelace and fell into the street. A staff car hit him and he died ... He was the type that gives anarchists a bad name.
>
> Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (27)

In the recent film *Blown Away* (1994), a mad bomber wreaks havoc on the city of Boston, introducing the spectre of anarchy into the heart of private, civic and national order. Paraphrasing Bakunin he declares that "I'm not a destroyer, I'm a creator," and announces the inauguration of "a new kind of government, anarchy". From the labyrinthine depths of an abandoned cargo ship he orchestrates explosions throughout the city that threaten the family of the movie's hero, the police-force itself, and, symbolically, the very foundation of the nation: the final climactic scene occurs during a July Fourth performance of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, recalling Hoffendahl's great symphonic revolt. Wearing a t-shirt garishly decorated with faces of Christ, and identified as an Irish terrorist too bad even for the IRA, this character battles the good James Dove against a background laced with Catholic symbolism; the film thus

repeats the conflation of Fenianism and anarchism at the end of the nineteenth century, as well as articulating the conflict of anarchy and order within the context of religious ideology found in much of anarchist typology as well as in Chesterton.

The cover-article of the February 1994 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, entitled "The Coming Anarchy", updates the fears of the 1880s and 90 in bold capitals:

> NATIONS BREAK UP UNDER THE TIDAL FLOW OF REFUGEES FROM ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DISASTER. AS BORDERS CRUMBLE, ANOTHER TYPE OF BOUNDARY IS ERECTED -- A WALL OF DISEASE. WARS ARE FOUGHT OVER SCARCE RESOURCES ... AND WAR ITSELF BECOMES CONTINUOUS WITH CRIME, AS ARMED BANDS OF STATELESS MARAUDERS CLASH WITH THE PRIVATE SECURITY FORCES OF THE ELITES.

Compounded with the transgression of borders associated with social breakdown is the larger anarchy associated with environmental fears, the revolt of the earth itself. Inside, the author, Robert J. Kaplan, quotes Thomas Homer-Dixon, head of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of Toronto, who identifies the source of this cthonic revolt as population growth, the proliferation of the masses which will have "incredible security implications" (60). Dixon imagines the world of the near future in a metaphor of class exclusiveness:

> Think of a stretch limo in the potholed streets of New York, where homeless beggars live. Inside the limo are the air-conditioned post-industrial regions of North America, Europe, the emerging Pacific Rim, and a few other isolated places ... Outside is the rest of mankind, going in a completely different direction. (60)

In the face of this increasingly polarized geo-political situation, Kaplan envisions an apocalyptic, cartographic nightmare: "Henceforward the map of the world will never be static. This future map -- in a sense, the 'Last Map' -- will be an ever-mutating representation of chaos" (75).

In J.M. Coetzee's most recent novel, *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), Fyodor Dostoevsky encounters Sergei Nechaev in the capital of Tsarist Russia. Nechaev is a sinister figure who may have been responsible for the death of the writer's stepson, and who carries a list of government officials to be assassinated. The novel's meditation on the relationship between fathers and sons implicitly recalls Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Children* (1862) which contains the nihilist character Bazarov; its construction of anarchism as a form of demonic possession recalls Dostoevsky's novel *The Possessed* (1871), the character of Peter Verkhovensky in which is based on Nechaev, as well as the more general associations in anarchist typology of anarchism as form of diabolism.

At the end of the twentieth century, anarchy and anarchism, it seems, are back. As at the end of the nineteenth century, moreover, millennial trepidation has added an apocalyptic tone, as we slouch toward the year 2000, to the very real concerns raised by Kaplan -- overpopulation, environmental disaster, the gap between privileged and underprivileged sectors of society, and violence. While articles like Kaplan's are implicity informed by the kind of fear-of-anarchy rhetoric we have seen to be operative in late-Victorian culture, and while movies like *Blown Away* disseminate explicit examples of anarchist typology to mass audiences, less panicky interest in anarchism seems also to be growing -- in novels like Coetzee's which examines both the social conditions by which the terrorist is formed and middle-class complicity in those conditions, and in the prolific output of anarchist writers like George Woodcock and Noam Chomsky. A growing interest in the latter is indicated by the release in 1992 of the film *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*, co-produced by the National Film Board of Canada.

In the face of increasingly powerful modes of mass communication -- newspaper circulations that dwarf those of the 1880s and 90s, television and film -- contemporary anarchists risk becoming just further examples of Woodcock's voices crying out in the wilderness. In order for them to be heard, and for a fuller version of political dialogue to

be allowed to come into being, therefore, the ideological voices of the mass communication over which these voices can barely be heard must be examined in order to demonstrate how the cultural 'truths' they produce are constructed.

Such a project is the one that Chomsky has been engaged in since the 1960s, in his studies of American media coverage of international and domestic news that reveal the voices this coverage allows to speak and those it silences. Over the course of this thesis I have endeavoured to perform a similar task in a different way. By examining the cultural constructions of anarchism in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods -- the periods of the first explosion of mass-communications following the removal of the newspaper taxes -- I hope to have indicated the stereotypes by which media, popular fictional and literary discourses construct anarchism as a threatening cultural other, a danger to the central values around which the ideologies of the writers I have focused on are organized: a threat to the aura of art in James, to sanity and empire in Conrad, and to religious populism in Chesterton. In studying these texts against the background of cultural stereotypes, I hope to have shown how otherwise sophisticated writers -- at least in the cases of James and Conrad -- articulate versions of the same cultural anxieties expressed more explicitly in texts that have not so readily survived.

In doing so, I hope to have achieved two purposes. First, to contribute to the project of historical recontextualization that, since the 1980s, has regained prominence within literary studies and thus to shed light on the complex and fascinating interrelationship of the ideologies of texts and culture; secondly, to indicate the specific rhetoric of anarchist typology that still today informs the construction of the political alternative represented by anarchism, an alternative which, although I am not completely in agreement with it, is one that I believe is worth listening to.

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